FROM HOWARD TO NELSON

EDITED BY
J. KNOX LAUGHTON

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Including Drake, Blake, Rooke, Anson, Hawke, Boscawen, Rodney, Howe, Hood, St. Vincent, and others.

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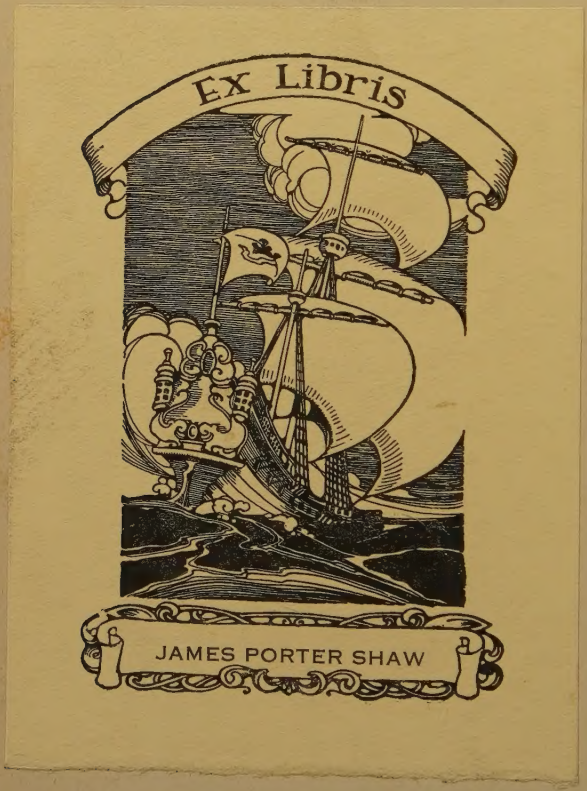

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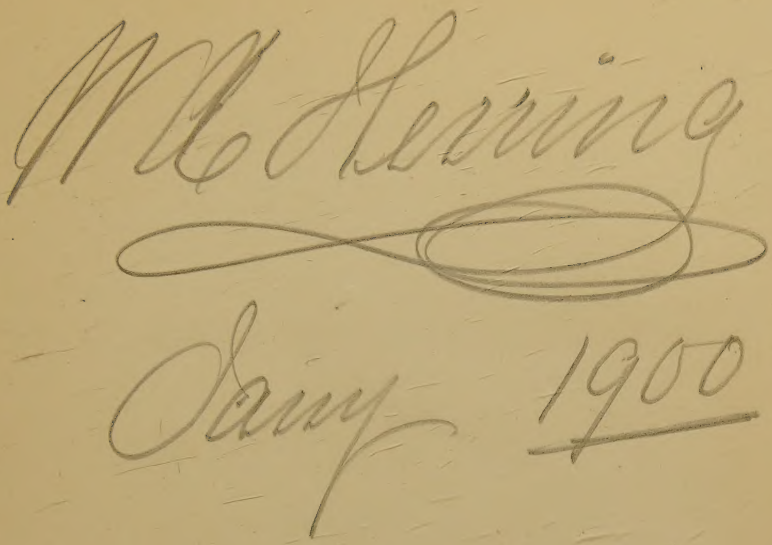
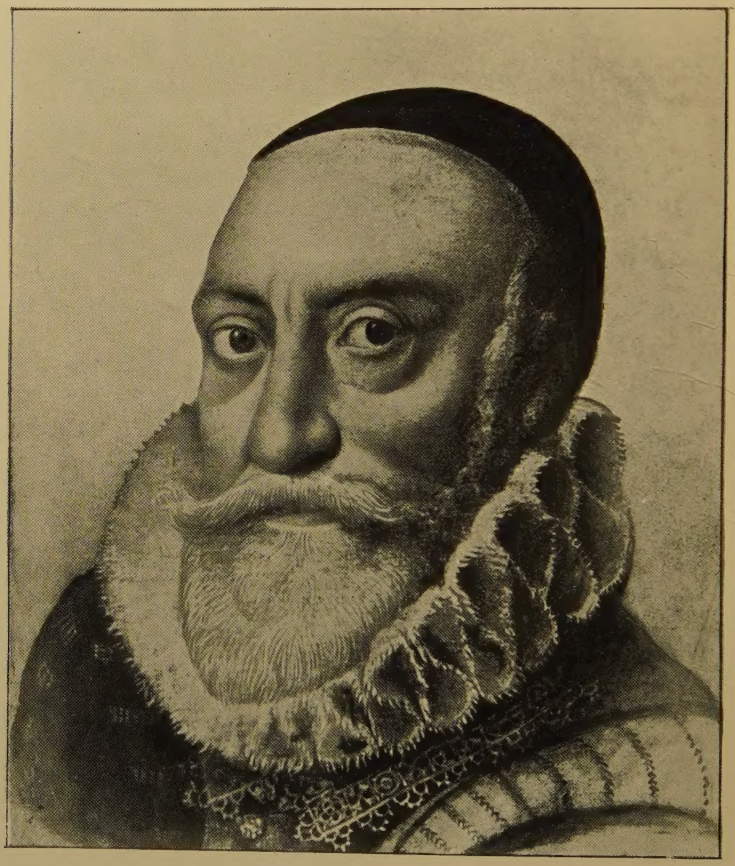


TWELVE SAILORS



HOWARD

From Howard to Nelson:

TWELVE SAILORS

EDITED BY

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WITH PORTRAITS AND MAPS

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INTRODUCTION

BEING considered one to whom Chronology as well as Geography is part of the stock-in-trade, the Editor has often been asked to assign a date to the birth of the English navy. He has always answered that it is impossible to do so; that the navy, like the family of Douglas, is seen in the stream but not in the fountain; that when English history begins, the navy was already an English institution; that the first mention of the English people that has come down to us, describes them as fierce pirates, the terror of the North Sea; and the name of the Saxon shore, the name of England itself, bears testimony to the continuance of their early sea power. What was done in later years by Alfred or Ethelred or Henry VIII, was work of reconstruction, of reorganization, of improved administration—such as the present century has known when the navy board was abolished, in 1832; when screw line-of-battle ships took the place of sailing ships in 1853–60, or were themselves superseded by the ironclads of the present day. But great as was the work accomplished in each of their reigns, the navy was not called into being by Alfred, or Ethelred, or Henry VIII, any more than it was by William IV or Victoria.

*

It is indeed true that the young navy, composed, as it was, of ships which could not keep the sea, was vastly stronger for attack than for defence; that at first, it was quite unequal to ward off invasion; and that, even after the reconstruction by Alfred, or the reorganization by Ethelred, it was not the sure safeguard which it eventually became. Like other national institutions, it had its ups and its downs; but at a very early period in our history, men recognized that the security of the kingdom was based on its navy. When, in 1213, the Earl of Salisbury captured or burnt the whole of the French fleet at Damme; when, in 1217, Hubert de Burgh destroyed the French fleet off Sandwich; when Edward III annihilated the French fleet at Sluys in 1340, or crushed the Spaniards off Winchelsea in 1350, there was no doubt in the minds of our forefathers that the navy was "the wall and fence of the kingdom." "But now," wrote Capgrave in the evil days of Henry VI, "now that our enemies are upon the wall, what will they do to us, unprepared to receive them? Our ships are scanty, our sailors few in number and unskilled in seamanship. Truly, the ship ought to be taken off our money and a sheep be stamped on it instead."

The accession of Henry VII brought in the dawn of a better state of things; and the modern organization of the navy was begun by Henry VIII. Since then, each century has witnessed great changes; changes in the structure, the equipment, the armament of our ships—this now expiring century the greatest of all; changes too in the administration and organization; and yet, through all, we may trace the continuity of progress, the permanence of tradition. Unquestionably the civil wars of the fifteenth century made

a break—not absolute, but relative and strongly marked; and on this account as well as on account of the modern organization then begun, the navy may, in a restricted sense, be dated from the reign of Henry VIII. It was then, too, that the sea-keeping power of ships began to be improved, and the science of war at sea, as we now understand it, began to be developed. The modern history of the English navy may thus properly be said to begin at this time; and it has been so considered in the several chapters of the present volume.

In these chapters, which trace the career of some of our most distinguished sailors—the men who may most fittingly be denominated the Builders of the Empire—there is no pretence at original research. It has indeed sometimes happened that special opportunities or special studies have given the writer special knowledge; and the opening pages of the sketch of Lord Hood are based on notes made by the Editor a couple of years ago during a short summer holiday in Dorsetshire, when circumstances enabled him to examine the registers of Netherbury and some other interesting documents—leases and suchlike—throwing light on the ramifications of this remarkable family. But, as a broad generality, the facts of history and biography have been taken from the latest authorities, and largely from the memoirs in the *Dictionary of National Biography*—for which, indeed, the Editor, in another capacity, is mainly responsible. What has been chiefly aimed at is to show how the work and methods of the great sailors of the past strike the sailors of the present; and for that, the Editor may justly congratulate himself on having secured the co-operation of the very distinguished

officers who have contributed the several chapters. Some of these are already well known in the field of literature; all are known as commanders of long and varied experience; men who, having for many years braved the dangers of the sea, are in the ideal position to comprehend its mysteries.

In passing the work through the press, the Editor has ventured to add a few notes, in elucidation or further illustration of statements in the text. For these, which are distinguished by square brackets, he alone is responsible.

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HOWARD

Twelve Sailors

I

THE EARL OF NOTTINGHAM, K.G.

CHARLES HOWARD, Lord Howard of Effingham, Earl of Nottingham, as he was differently called at different stages of his long and eventful career, was lord high admiral of England when England was first rising into eminence as a great maritime power, and commander-in-chief of England's fleet in two of the most critical and important actions in England's history. It has indeed been very commonly said that he was neither seaman nor commander-in-chief; that Drake defeated the Armada, that Ralegh led the fleet triumphantly into Cadiz; and that Howard was nothing more than a costly figure-head, placed in a high position by his relationship to the queen, and maintained in it by courtly intrigues. A careful study of his career shows that this estimate of him is erroneous; that though not trained to the sea from his boyhood, as was Drake or Hawkyns or Frobiser, he had nevertheless a considerable experience of maritime affairs; and that, though perhaps not qualified to be boatswain or master of one of the queen's ships, he

had a more familiar and practical knowledge of the art of war by sea than many of his contemporaries who are commonly ranked among the most brilliant of Elizabethan seamen—Ralegh, Greynvile and Cumberland, or than some of the most illustrious of his successors—Blake and Sandwich and Albemarle. It is indeed true that he owed his appointment as lord admiral to the accident of birth, though not so much to his being the cousin of the queen, as to his being the son of his father, the first Lord Howard of Effingham; and the nephew of his uncles, Sir Edward Howard and Lord Thomas Howard (afterwards Earl of Surrey and Duke of Norfolk), who had held the same office of lord admiral under Henry VIII and Queen Mary, as their grandfather had done under Richard III.

There are few things more remarkable in English history than the story of the Howards under the Tudors. They were of old lineage, but not one of the great families of Plantagenet times. It was only on the extinction of the male line of the Mowbrays, Earls of Nottingham and Dukes of Norfolk, that John Howard, the representative of the family through his mother, and the loyal follower of Richard III, was created Duke of Norfolk in 1483. "Jockey of Norfolk" was killed, with his master, in the battle of Bosworth; the title was attainted; and though Thomas, the son of "Jockey," made his peace with Henry VII and was created Earl of Surrey in 1489, the higher title remained in abeyance till 1514, when it was restored for his good service to the State on the field of Flodden.

But meantime the Earl of Surrey and his sons—of whom there were many—had been winning distinction by good and loyal service; more especially the two eldest,

Lord Thomas Howard and Sir Edward Howard. It is said that one, or other, or both, of these commanded the ships which, in 1511, put an end to the piracies and the life of Andrew Barton; and though the story which has come down to us in the old ballad is certainly fiction, it is true that Barton was defeated and slain at that time, and it is not improbable that the Howards were the heroes of the achievement.

In 1512 Sir Edward Howard commanded the fleet off Brest, then but recently become a French port, but destined to be ever since the great arsenal and rallying-point of the French navy. In the battle fought on the 10th August, the Regent, commanded by Sir Thomas Knyvet, Howard's brother-in-law, was grappled by the Marie de la Cordelière, commanded by a Breton noble, Hervé de Porzmoguer—known to the French chroniclers as Primauguet, and to the English as Sir Piers Morgan—whose house, near Conquet, Howard had burnt a short time before. The two ships, the largest in their respective fleets, caught fire and blew up together, the greater part of the men on board perishing, to the number of near fifteen hundred.

Howard, who was warmly attached to his brother-in-law, vowed revenge; and in April 1513—having in the meantime succeeded to the office of admiral of England—he returned off Brest with a powerful fleet—the whole navy of England, strengthened by many merchant ships hired for the occasion. To such a force the French fleet was unequal, and it remained within the harbour, guarding its position by batteries and fireships, while Howard, anchoring in Bertheaume Bay, closely blockaded the port. And presently a squadron of galleys came round from the

Mediterranean, under the command of the Chevalier Prégent de Bidoux, a knight of St. John, whose name frequently occurs in the history of the Neapolitan wars, but whom our English chroniclers have miscalled "Prior John." Too weak to fight, and unable to pass into the harbour without fighting, Prégent took refuge in Whitsand Bay (*les Blancs Sablons*), and anchored close inshore, where, by reason of the shoal water, the English ships could not attack him.

Then followed the first attempt at "cutting out" which has been recorded. Howard went in with the boats of the fleet and some row-barges. He himself, in one of these, steered straight for Prégent's galley, grappled and sprang on board, at the head of some seventeen of his men. But then the French cut the grapnel rope; the tide swept the row-barge away, and Howard and his companions were left unsupported. The other boats, unable through the smoke to see clearly what had happened, supposing that Howard had missed his aim, galled extremely by the enemy's shot, and having no definite instructions, returned to the ships, as also did the admiral's barge. It was only then known that the admiral had been left behind. A flag of truce was sent in, to learn that all the Englishmen had been pushed overboard at point of pike.

The death of the admiral of England naturally caused some excitement. The rashness of Howard, the blundering stupidity—to give it no worse name—of his followers, was lost sight of in his boldness and audacity. It might not be war, but it was magnificent; and even from far away Scotland King James wrote to his brother-in-law, Henry VIII: "Surely, dearest brother, we think more loss is to you of your late admiral, who deceased to his great honour

and laud, than the advantage might have been of the winning of all the French galleys and their equipage." Sir Edward's elder brother, Lord Thomas, was made admiral in his place, but had no opportunity of winning distinction at sea, though on shore some months later, as the readers of 'Marmion' will remember, he gallantly supported his father in the battle of Flodden.

A younger brother, William, the eldest by his father's second marriage, served during Henry VIII's later Scotch and French wars, and for part, at least, of the time in command at sea. In March 1554 he was made lord admiral, and during the following three years was frequently in command of squadrons at sea; amongst others, of that squadron which, in July 1554, escorted Philip of Spain to Southampton, when he came to England to marry Queen Mary; a service more notable in fiction than in history; for the familiar story that, on meeting the prince in the Channel, he compelled him to strike his flag and lower his topsails in acknowledgment of the queen's "dominion of the sea," is unsupported by any contemporary evidence, English or Spanish. We may be quite sure that if anything of the kind had happened, it would have been mentioned, if only as an instance of English barbarism, by those charming Spanish chroniclers who described the black stockings and short skirts of the English ladies. Like many other stories relating to the "dominion of the sea," it may be confidently pronounced to be fiction, possibly with, more probably without, some slender basis of fact.

All this may seem somewhat foreign to the story of Charles Howard. It is, in reality, closely connected with

it; for, as has been shown, notwithstanding various breaks, the office of lord admiral was, for a century and a half, largely an appanage of the Howard family. In the traditions of that inheritance, and amid the legends which perpetuated the memory of Sir Edward's exploits and glorious death, Charles Howard grew from infancy to manhood. It has been supposed—in all probability correctly—that he served afloat with his father during the three or four years from 1554 to 1557: possibly also during the early period 1544 to 1546. If so, he had a great deal more sea-service as a lad than was considered necessary, in the last great war, to qualify an admiral's son for promotion to the rank of captain and the command of a saucy frigate. Born in 1536, he was twenty-one in 1557, when his father's service as lord admiral came to an end; and at the age of twenty-one, many a gallant officer in the old war was a very competent seaman. Whether Howard was or was not is not a point of the first consequence: it is sufficient for our present purpose to show that in all probability he acquired in his youth a familiar knowledge of ships and sailors and the duties of sea-officers, which in later life he was to turn to such eminent advantage.

With the accession of Elizabeth, a new life opened to him. With his father, he had been under a cloud during a great part of Mary's reign. The father had indeed been created Lord Howard of Effingham in March 1554, for his loyal service in the suppression of Wyat's rebellion; but the memory of this had been obliterated by the suspicion of what was deemed undue attachment to the interests of Elizabeth. It is even said that things might have gone hard with him, had it not been for his popularity with the

seamen. Later on, Mary seems to have been assured of his loyalty; but though in the last year of her reign she appointed him lord chamberlain of the household, she continued to regard him with disfavour. By Elizabeth he was again appointed lord chamberlain, and in 1559 was one of the commissioners to negotiate the treaty of Cateau Cambrésis. His son also stepped into a prominent position at court. A new life opened to him. Handsome in person, gentle and adventurous in disposition, he became a favourite with the queen, to whom the equality of age and the near relationship at once commended him. With few exceptions, as when he was sent with a complimentary embassy to Francis II of France, he passed the first twelve years of the reign in attendance on the court; and though in 1569 he had a command in the army employed under the Earl of Warwick in the suppression of the rising in the north, it was not till 1570 that he had any service at sea. He then commanded the squadron sent to escort the young Queen of Spain down the Channel; perhaps also to insure the coasts or trade of England from any aggression on the part of the ships that conveyed her.

From the earliest times, England has always been jealous of the appearance of foreign ships of war in the Narrow Seas, which she claimed as English territory, and her guard against them has, from time to time, taken the guise of compliment; but the story told by Hakluyt, that Howard "environed the Spanish fleet in most strange and warlike sort and enforced them to stoop gallant and to vail their bonnets for the Queen of England," is probably a very exaggerated account of the salutes at meeting. That he used any force towards them is virtually contra-

dicted by the silence of the State Papers. In any case the service was but a small thing, and scarcely interrupted his attendance on the queen.

By his father's death in 1573, he succeeded to the barony as Lord Howard of Effingham, the title by which he is most commonly known, as being that which he bore during the years of his most brilliant and important services. On the death of the Earl of Lincoln in 1585, he was appointed lord admiral of England, not—as has been already said—on account of any special knowledge of sea affairs, or any peculiar aptness for command which he might be supposed to have, but because he was a Howard ; because he was his father's son ; because he was the queen's cousin.

It must, however, be remembered that he was, by this time, in his fiftieth year. The queen was about three years his senior, and during the twenty-seven years of her reign, had come to consider him not only as a courtier, but as a devoted friend and prudent adviser. The time was critical, for the long-simmering enmity of Spain broke out into open hostility ; and though war was not declared, though diplomatic relations were not broken off, an avowedly English army was sent to the Low Countries, and Drake, with a strong fleet, was sent on a raiding voyage through the West Indies. Add to this the Throckmorton conspiracy, fomented and supported by Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador, who was summarily ordered to quit the country ; and the Babington conspiracy, implicating the unfortunate Queen of Scots, who was tried by a special commission, found guilty, and sentenced to death—the story of all which is to be read in the history of the time. What concerns us here, as evidence of the very high and

responsible position then occupied by Howard, are the facts that he was one of the commissioners on this, as on many later and important trials; and that afterwards, it was mainly he who induced the queen to sign the order for the sentence to be carried into execution.

We might then easily persuade ourselves that his appointment on the 21st December, 1587, as "lieutenant-general, commander-in-chief and governor of the whole fleet and army at sea fitted forth against the Spaniards and their allies," was given to him, not only because he was lord admiral, because he was the queen's cousin, because he was more or less nearly related to everybody who was anybody, but, to some extent also, because he was known as a man of prudence as well as of conduct, a man of tried valour and of some experience at sea, a man of calm and judicial temper, who could be trusted to moderate the rashness, or control the fiery passions of his subordinates. This however is merely a suggestion, which is ill-supported by the queen's conduct in appointing a worthless favourite, like Leicester, to the command of the army in the Low Countries, or a hot-headed braggart, like Essex, to the joint command of the expedition to Cadiz. All that we can say then is that, on this occasion, the choice of custom and of court influence was also the choice of wisdom. No better appointment could have been made.

The name of Drake, will, of course, occur to every one as that of a possible substitute; perhaps even as of one who ought to have been preferred to Howard. Drake—whose achievements are related in the next chapter—was unquestionably one of the finest seamen England has known.

He was a man of a most resolute and venturesome courage, which to many seemed akin to rashness, but was in reality tempered by skill, knowledge, prudence and foresight ; one whose very name carried terror to England's enemies and confidence to England's friends ; but, masterful, self-reliant and self-sufficient to an extreme degree, he was not always happy as a commander in an age when men thought more of social than of service rank. In his voyage round the world, he had to pass and execute a sentence of death on Doughty ; in his expedition to Cadiz, he had to put Borough under arrest ; and whilst fresh from the defeat of the Armada, a violent quarrel between him and Frobiser was smoothed over only, it would appear, by the tact of Lord Sheffield, if not, indeed, by the good offices of Howard himself.

It was in this and matters such as this that high rank was necessary in a commander-in-chief. Lord Henry Seymour—a son of the Protector Somerset—felt it a hardship to obey even Howard ; he would have flatly refused to receive orders from Drake. So also with the other noblemen in the fleet—captains of ships or volunteers ; they could accept orders from a man of Howard's rank and age which they would not have done from a plebeian like Drake ; and Hawkyns, Wynter, Frobiser, Palmer and others would have considered any order of Drake's as one to be obeyed or not at their pleasure. They considered Drake as an equal, whose right to command might be disputed ; to be commanded by Howard was in natural course, and the higher his rank, the greater the honour.

So in the end of December 1587 Howard took com-

mand of the fleet then gathered in the Narrow Seas, as the practical answer to the threatening reports from Spain—reports of a vast fleet there fitting out, or of immediate invasion by the army already in the Low Countries. To many this last seemed the more certain, the danger most to be guarded against; and though Drake was early sent to Plymouth to command the ships of the West Country, it was not till the end of May 1588 that Howard joined him there with the bulk of the fleet, leaving the guard of the Narrow Seas to Lord Henry Seymour, with whom were Sir William Wynter and Sir Henry Palmer, men who had "followed the sea" from their youth, though, differing from most of their contemporaries, they had served only in ships of the navy royal. Palmer was comparatively a young man; but for forty or, it may be, for near fifty years, wherever a fleet had been assembled—in Scotland, in France or in the west of Ireland—there Wynter had served, accumulating experience and a knowledge of the science of naval war. He was now and had for several years been master of the ordnance; and though between him and Hawkyns, the treasurer of the navy, there was bitter jealousy if not enmity, during this year the two were apart, each working for the common weal.

As guard of the Narrow Seas, it devolved on Seymour's squadron to keep a constant eye on the movements of the Prince of Parma in the Low Countries, and especially to watch Dunkirk and the ports of the Scheldt, wherever it was possible that an embarkation might be attempted. And this was continued through all the early summer, notwithstanding the boisterous weather of an exceptional season. Of this service we have detailed accounts in the

extant letters of Lord Henry Seymour;[1] but of even greater interest are the few letters from Wynter, showing, as they do, how, with few traditions to guide him, he had evolved from his experience and judgment a right understanding of one of the first principles of what we now—thanks to Captain Mahan—know as "the influence of sea power." From this point of view, one of his letters written to Walsyngham on the 20th June is so interesting and so important, that some sentences of it are here given in language only slightly modernized from the original.

"It seems, by your Honour's letters, that the Prince of Parma's intention is towards Sheppey, Harwich or Yarmouth; two of which places—Sheppey and Harwich—I know perfectly; the other not so well. And yet, if I do not mistake the situation of the said places, they are such that a small charge, in a manner of speaking, will make them of sufficient strength to withstand any sudden attempt. And whereas it is said that the prince's strength is 30,000 soldiers, then I assure your Honour that it is no small quantity of shipping that will be needed for the transport of that number and of what belongs to them—without which I do not think they will start. There must be at least 300 sail, of the average burden of 60 tons. For I well remember that in the expedition to Scotland, in the time of her Majesty's father,[2] when we burned Leith and Edinburgh, there were 260 sail of ships; and yet we were not able to land more than 11,000 men, though in no fear of any hindrance by sea. It may be said that the distance between Flanders and the places named is shorter than from England to the Firth in Scotland; which is true. But, sir, men that come for such a purpose,

[1] Recently published by the Navy Records Society in *State Papers relating to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada.*

[2] May 1544.

being so huge an army as 30,000 men, must have a mighty deal of all sorts of stores to serve them, as your honourable wisdom can well consider.

"And I take the prince's case to be very different [from ours in 1544]. For I suppose if the countries of Holland and Zealand did furnish only the shipping which—when he sailed for Plymouth—the lord admiral wrote to our admiral they would send from those parts to join us here, namely, thirty-six sail of ships of war, and if it were known to the prince those ships did nothing but remain in readiness to go to the seas to attack his fleet as soon as it came out, I should live until I were young again ere the prince would venture to set his ships forth. And again, if her Majesty's ships, and the others that are now left under our admiral's charge, may be kept together in their present state, the prince's forces, which he has in Flanders at this time—upon which we mean to keep as good a watch for their coming out as we possibly can—dare not come to the seas. But the sorrow we have is that we think these dealings of his to be rather a scarecrow, to hasten or bring to pass such an end of the treaty as may be most for his master's advantage, than that he means to set forward the thing he is making a show of. Your honourable opinion that 1000 footmen and 200 horsemen might be assigned to each of the three several places before named, to resist any attempt, and to remain until it be seen what the prince's designs may be, I conceive to be very good. For in these princely actions, a man cannot be too provident ; and no wisdom were it to put things to an even balance when more weight may be added."

And after commenting on the different items of intelligence which had reached them, he concluded—"If it will please your Honour to cause some one of your good friends hereabouts near the seaside, to bestow a buck upon me and Sir Henry Palmer, we should think ourselves

greatly beholden to your Honour;" as to which he wrote again, about six weeks later—"The best store of victuals that I and Sir Henry Palmer have at this time is your Honour's venison, for the which we humbly thank you."

Even in the Downs the victualling of the ships was a matter of continual and pressing difficulty. At Plymouth, where the great bulk of the fleet was assembled under Howard's personal command, the difficulty was still greater. Howard wished to have the ships always with victuals for six weeks on board; instead of which, the supplies came slowly, irregularly, rarely before they were absolutely wanted, and then generally only for a fortnight or at most a month. During the whole season, the ships were always in need, for this scanty provision was running short almost as soon as it had been put on board. From the very first before he went to Plymouth, Howard had urged the importance of a greater supply, and had pointed out the danger which might easily happen, of the ships being called on for immediate service just as their victuals ran out.

It has been often said that this want was caused by the shameful parsimony of the queen. It does not, however, appear that the queen had anything to do with it, or that there was any parsimony in the matter. On the contrary, the money seems to have been regularly ordered and paid; and the cause of the scantiness of the supplies was the absence of previous preparation, and the utter want of established store-houses or victualling-yards, so that the victuals had to be purchased at the time as the agent could find them, and to be supplemented or eked out in various ways not quite regular; as, for instance, by seizing for the service of the crown, a cargo of rice on board a Hansa ship

which put into Plymouth ; or again, by putting the men on short allowance, five or six men to a mess instead of four. As, however, the established ration at the time was two pounds of beef and a gallon of beer per man, it does not seem that there was any very great hardship entailed on the ships' companies by this measure, while it gave Howard a freedom of action by always leaving him with a margin of supplies beyond what was known to Burghley, who for the time being had this department under his control.

During his stay at Plymouth Howard continually urged on the queen and the queen's ministers the advisability, the necessity of the fleet's going to look for the enemy on their own coasts or in their own ports, even as Drake had looked for them the year before in the harbour of Cadiz, when he "singed the King of Spain's beard." To this, however, the queen would not consent. She, or her ministers in her name, sent him instructions on no account to go so far south as the Isles of Bayona, lest the Spanish fleet, standing out well to the west, might avoid them, leave them behind, and so come in, unopposed, to land either in England or in Ireland, or to go to Scotland. Howard's reply is noteworthy, not only as showing the pertinacity with which he urged his proposals, but also as showing how clearly he understood the matter in hand. It may be, and very probably was, that he was repeating the arguments urged by the old experienced sailors at the council of war ; but here and always his letters and phrases are those of a man who perfectly well understood what he was talking about. Writing to Walsyngham on the 15th June, he said—

"For the meaning we had to go on the coast of Spain, it was deeply debated by those whom I think the world judges to be the men of greatest experience in this realm, namely, Sir Francis Drake, Mr. Hawkyns, Mr. Frobiser, and Mr. Thomas Fenner; and I hope her Majesty will not think that we went so rashly to work, or without a principal and choice care and respect for the safety of this realm. We would go on the coast of Spain, and therefore our ground first was to look principally to that; and if we found that they but lingered on their own coast, or had put into the Isles of Bayona or Corunna, then we thought, in the judgment of all men of experience here, that it would be most fit to seek some good way, the surest we could devise, by the good protection of God, to defeat them. We considered also that to the Spanish forces, being victualled, as they are, for a long time, it would be very good policy to delay, so as to drive us to consume our victuals, which, as far as we can see, cannot easily be replaced, whatever efforts the queen and you may make. And if the queen thinks that she is in this respect on a par with the King of Spain, she is much deceived and may be brought into great peril. For this abuse of the negotiations plainly shows how the King of Spain will have all things perfect, as his plot is laid, before he will proceed to execute. I am persuaded he will see the Duke of Guise bring the French king to his purpose before he will act. If this be his intention, what, I pray you, will become of us when our victuals are consumed in gazing for them? Whether this may not breed very great danger and dishonour, I leave to her Majesty's wisdom; but if it should fall out so, I would I had never been born.

"And if we were to-morrow on the coast of Spain, I would not land in any place, to offend any; but they should perceive that we did not come to plunder, but to seek out the great force and fight with them; and that, they should know by message, which would be the surest way

and most honourable to her Majesty. But now that we are directed to lie off and on betwixt England and Spain, the south-west wind that shall bring them to Scotland or Ireland, shall put us to leeward. The seas are broad; but if we were on their coast, they durst not put off, leaving us on their backs; and when they came with the south-westerly wind, which they must have if they are bound for Ireland or Scotland, though we were as high as Cape Clear we could not go to them so long as the wind remains westerly. And if we lie so high [as Cape Clear] then may the Spanish fleet hug the coast of France and make the Isle of Wight; which, for my part, I think they will attempt, if they come to England."

This is not the letter of a man who was a mere figure-head; rather is it the letter of one who was, in fact as well as in name, the commander-in-chief. It is a letter which shows a clear understanding and appreciation of the naval and political circumstances; and though in it Howard speaks of being guided or at least supported by the opinion of his council, it would have been strange indeed if he had not attached great weight to it, coming as it did from men who had a much fuller knowledge and wider experience of nautical affairs than himself. But the appeal to a council of war was in no way peculiar to Howard; and for more than a hundred years after this time, it was not only customary, but prescribed, to summon a council on every possible occasion. No important movement of the fleet could take place without one. It was not till it had been shown—as in the fatal instance which led to the execution of Admiral Byng—that it was at least as likely to blunder as one commander-in-chief, that it was seldom likely to act with promptitude or vigour, and

that it could not absolve the admiral from responsibility, that an end was put to the practice ; though in a very modified form, and entirely at the option of the commanding officer, it may be said to have continued to the present time.

Howard certainly shared Drake's opinion of the advisability of looking for the enemy in their own ports, because he had sufficient insight into the conditions of the problem to be convinced by Drake's reasoning ; and being so convinced, he made the proposal his own, even though the queen forbade its being carried into effect. The queen's object in forbidding it may be doubted. In his letter of the 9th June, to which Howard's, just quoted, was the answer, Walsyngham said that she feared, if the fleet went on the coast of Spain, the Spaniards might give them the slip, standing well out to the west, and so come into the Channel in their absence. Had that been her true reason, she would surely have been convinced by the arguments of Howard, supported, as they were, by the authority of Drake and his fellows. Nor is it at all likely that she was so entirely hoodwinked, as has been supposed, by the false protestations of the Prince of Parma and by the sham negotiations which were being carried on in Flanders ; she was herself too well versed in the arts of dissimulation to be snared by such evident pretences. It is, perhaps, more probable that she believed the war might still be carried on in the same cheap and desultory fashion as during the last three years, and was unwilling to set Philip the example of more sustained efforts. It is very possible she had persuaded herself that the preparations in Spain were merely a threat, which, however, any aggressive

action of hers might convert into a reality. Howard, indeed, seems to have believed that she was hoodwinked, and from the very first ceased not to insist that treachery was intended. As early as the 27th January he wrote to Walsyngham—

"I have made of the French king, the Scottish king, and the King of Spain, a Trinity that I mean never to trust to be saved by, and I would that, in regard to them, others were of my opinion. Sir, there was never, since England was England, such a stratagem and mask made to deceive England with as is this of the treaty of peace."

And again on the 23rd June, he wrote—

"Let her Majesty trust no more to Judas kisses; for let her assure herself there is no trust to French king nor Duke of Parma. Let her defend herself like a noble and mighty prince, and trust to her sword and not to their word, and then she need not fear, for her good God will defend her."

And on the same 23rd June he wrote to the queen herself—

"For the love of Jesus Christ, Madam, awake thoroughly and see the villainous treasons round about you, against your Majesty and your realm, and draw your forces round about you, like a mighty prince, to defend you. Truly, Madam, if you do so, there is no cause to fear. If you do not, there will be danger."

This is not the language of a man who is merely the mouth-piece of another's opinion.

Meanwhile, the Spanish fleet had sailed from Lisbon. The accounts of it which had reached England were grossly exaggerated, partly, it may be, because the spies felt bound

to give good measure for their pay; partly, also, because popular belief in Lisbon was itself deceived, accepted the first estimates as actual facts, and had dubbed the Armada, the invincible. Many causes had, however, combined to lessen both its numerical force and its efficiency. Of these, by far the most serious was the death, early in the year, of its appointed general, the Marquis of Santa Cruz, the only man in Spain who by birth was entitled and by experience was competent to command such an expedition. His name was encircled with a halo of naval victory. He had held a high command at the battle of Lepanto, and in the more recent action at Terceira was accredited with having put to ignominious flight the very English who were now the object of attack. The king and his court, however, do not seem to have realized the magnitude and importance of their loss. It had, indeed, appeared that Santa Cruz was by no means disposed to accept the part which was assigned to him as subordinate to the Duke of Parma; and it is quite possible that the king felt almost relieved by the solution of the difficulty which his death offered. The vacant command was given to the Duke of Medina Sidonia, a man with no qualifications for it except his distinguished birth and an unassuming character which would readily submit itself to the control of Parma. He was utterly ignorant of naval affairs, had but little experience of military, and none whatever of high command. Personally brave, as became his long line of ancestry, his total want of experience and knowledge rendered him, as a commander, timid, undecided and vacillating. But though he represented to the king that he was quite unfit for the appointment, the king insisted, and he obeyed.

Another and very important though less serious difficulty in the way of the war was the want of money. Although the origin of the war was very certainly political and commercial, it is equally certain that, on both sides, religious differences intensified the hostile feeling, and that zeal for the Catholic Church, stimulated by the promise of a million crowns from the pope, had a powerful influence on Philip's determination. Notwithstanding the continual influx of gold and silver from the Indies, the drain of the war in the Low Countries, the extravagance of the court, and the utter want of economy in every department of the government, all tended to render the kingdom poor in comparison with what might have been supposed, and had compelled Philip to put on one side the scheme, first drawn out by Santa Cruz, for the invasion of England with a fleet of upwards of five hundred ships and transports, and an army of a hundred thousand men. For such a gigantic effort the revenue was altogether insufficient. But the papal subsidy would have materially assisted in strengthening the force to be employed; and the non-payment of this, the refusal of the pope to pay a single crown till the army was landed in England, and the practical certainty, which Philip arrived at, that even then no crowns would be forthcoming, rendered a further limitation of the scheme necessary. Still, as the fleet at last sailed from Lisbon on the 20th May, it was truly formidable in the number and size of the ships.

But with the best will on the part of the king and notwithstanding the lavish expenditure, the equipment was faulty in the extreme. The victuals—the fame of which, for quantity and quality, had gone abroad through Europe

—were very bad, partly, it may be, from the difficulty of getting together the large supplies required, and principally from the dishonesty of the agents. Before the fleet had been many days at sea, the bread was found to be mouldy, the beef to be rotten; much of it had to be thrown overboard; the casks had leaked; both provisions and water had run short, and the men were very sickly. The ships, too, were severely strained; they were overmasted, were manned by soldiers rather than sailors, and were worked with difficulty; they were built more for cargo than for fighting; for a fair run down the trades to the West Indies, or a summer voyage home in the westerly winds; were high-charged, with lofty forecastles, and poop above poop almost to the height of the maintop, so that they were cumbrous, leewardly, and even in a light breeze heeled over so much that working the guns was very difficult, and firing them was very uncertain.

But without this disadvantage the Spanish gunnery was very bad, and their guns, in comparison with the English, were small and few. Even of their largest and best ships, the armament was very inferior, and the weight of metal thrown in a broadside was barely sixty per cent. of that of the corresponding English ships, while in very many of the ships which were counted as efficient men-of-war, the armament was merely nominal. The fact appears to be, and is so stated by the Spanish historian, Captain Fernandez Duro, that—

"the cannon was held by the Spaniards to be an ignoble arm; well enough for the beginning of the fray and to pass away the time till the moment of engaging hand-to-hand. It was thus that the gunners were recom-

mended to aim high, so as to dismantle the enemy and prevent his escape, but as it is difficult to hit a vertical stick, the result was that the shot were expended harmlessly in the sea, or at best made some holes in the sails, or cut a few ropes of no great consequence."

It was by hand-to-hand fighting that the Spaniards had won the victories on which their prestige rested; and notably at Lepanto, the memory of which was still fresh in men's minds, or at Terceira, from which the English were reported to have fled ingloriously. Whether there were any English ships at Terceira is uncertain; if there were, they made their escape, refusing to follow the suicidal tactics of Strozzi, who permitted his ships to be grappled and overwhelmed. For in fact, during the last thirty or forty years, the English seamen had been learning to trust to off-fighting, to quickness in manœuvring, and to the great gun.

It was, as it had been two thousand years before, in the wars between Athenians and Lacedæmonians; and now as then, the arms carried by the ship proved superior to the arms carried by the men. But in modern times, it was a new thing in naval war; and though the English sailors had tried it on a small scale in many a casual encounter, it had not been seriously attempted in any general action. To the great bulk of the Spaniards, to very many Englishmen, the number and size of the Spanish ships, the number and discipline of the Spanish soldiers seemed in crushing disproportion to the apparently small force of the English fleet; but the English seamen knew that the advantage lay, in reality, with them; and some of the Spaniards had realized that there might be a difficulty in

grappling the English ships and forcing them to accept the mode of fighting which the Spaniards had preferred. Very few indeed of them had understood that the great gun in the hands of the English was a terrible weapon: how terrible they had yet to learn. They learned it to their cost as soon as the fleets met.

After having put into Corunna to refit, re-provision, and to land their sick men, the Spaniards sailed again on the 12th July, and came off Plymouth on the 21st, coming up Channel in what has been described as a half-moon, but was apparently a line abreast, with the wings thrown back. The English fleet had been watching off Ushant, but being short of victuals, had run back before the same fresh southerly wind which brought the Spaniards across the Bay of Biscay. They had just come in and were engaged in provisioning, when the news was brought that the enemy were off the Lizard. The mischance which Howard had foreseen and warned Burghley against, had happened. The enemy had come on the coast when the English ships were short of victuals.

Howard would not wait to fill up, but, with the failing supplies that he had on board, warped out of the harbour against the south-westerly wind, crept to windward under the land, and on the morning of Sunday, the 21st July, attacked the Spanish rear, and more especially the left wing or rear-guard. The unequal conditions of the combat were at once manifested. The Spaniards, unable to close with the English, unable to offer any effective return to the fire, huddled together and pursued their way up Channel, deserting two of their best ships that were disabled, and so fell into the hands of the English. The one idea of Medina

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Sidonia was to get to his journey's end, join hands with Parma, and be relieved of further responsibility. But he made no attempt to separate the transports and store-ships from the heavily-armed vessels. They all carried a strong detachment of soldiers, and, from the Spanish point of view, were all effective fighting ships. Effective they would no doubt have been if they could have grappled with the English; but as the English ships were faster, more weatherly and more skilfully handled, the manner of fighting was in the discretion of the English, and the Spaniards were helpless.

In all ships of that day, the ports were very small; training, elevation or depression was scarcely attempted; the guns were laid horizontal and brought to bear by the action of the helm. The superiority of manœuvring thus gave the English an enormous advantage, intensified by the extreme crankness of the Spanish ships, which pointed their guns, on one side, towards the sky, on the other, towards the bottom of the sea, but seldom, on either, towards the English ships, which were very rarely hit.

During the following days the engagement was renewed off Portland and off the Isle of Wight, always with the same result. The Spaniards suffered severely, the English not at all. Off the Isle of Wight, according to Sir George Carey, the governor of the island, "the fight continued from five of the clock till ten [in the morning], with so great expenditure of powder and bullet, that during this time the shot continued so thick together that it might rather have been judged a skirmish with small shot on land than a fight with great shot on sea. In which conflict, thanks be to God, there hath not been two of our men hurt." Of the

Spanish loss in men, we have no satisfactory account; but one large ship was so disabled that she could no longer keep company with the fleet. She escaped in the night and got over to Havre, where, endeavouring to shelter in the river, she ran ashore and was broken up.

By the time they arrived off Calais the Spaniards felt that they were beaten, and though they still hoped to be joined by the Duke of Parma, they were looking to him for protection rather than counting themselves as the force which was to protect the army of invasion. It needed but the appearance of a few hastily-fitted fire-ships to scare them from their anchors, and the next day, the 29th July, they were fairly brought to action off Gravelines. They had arrived at the destined end of their voyage. To go farther would be to confess the failure of the expedition; they were forced to stay and fight; and they fought, many of them, at least, most bravely.

> "There lacked not men of prowess,
> Nor men of lordly race,
> For all *Hispania's* noblest
> Were round the fatal place;"

but the odds were heavy against them. The wind was blowing fresh, and the Armada streamed off before it. When their weathermost ships were attacked, those to leeward could render no assistance. The weathermost of the Spanish ships were indeed the largest and the best; but not more than thirty-two seem to have been actually engaged, and the brunt of the fighting fell on some fifteen. Of this great and critical, though in fact very one-sided battle, we have an admirably graphic account in a letter of Wynter's to Walsyngham, written on the 1st August. After describ-

ing the capture of the great galliass which was stranded before Calais, and was taken by the boats of the Ark and by some of the smaller vessels of the fleet, he continues—

"After the lord admiral perceived that our men had got possession of her, then, with such as were with him he bore up after the Spanish fleet, the wind being at SSW and the Spanish fleet bearing away NNE, making into the depth of the channel; and about nine of the clock in the morning, we fetched near unto them, being then abreast of Gravelines. They went into the form of a half-moon. Their admiral and vice-admiral and the greater number of their ships were in the middle; and on each side, in the wings, were their galliasses, the ships of Portugal and other good ships; in the whole to the number of sixteen of their principal ships in a wing. My fortune was to make choice to charge their starboard wing, without shooting off any ordnance until we came within six-score paces of them, and some of our ships did follow me.[1] The said wing found themselves, as it appeared, so charged, that in making haste to run into the body of their fleet, four of them entangled themselves, one aboard the other. One of them recovered himself, and so sheltered himself among the fleet. How the others were beaten, I will leave to the report of some of the Spaniards that leapt into the sea and were taken up and are now in the custody of some of our fleet.

"The fight continued from nine of the clock [in the morning] till six of the clock at night, during which time the Spanish fleet bore away NNE and N by E as much as they could, keeping company one with another in very good order. No doubt the spoil and harm that was done to them was great. I deliver it to your Honour, upon the credit of a poor gentleman, that out of my ship there

[1] This "charge" is the subject of the late Sir Oswald Brierley's fine picture of "Sir William Wynter in the Vanguard."

were shot 500 shot of demi-cannon, culverin and demi-culverin (32, 18, and 9-pounders); and when I was furthest off in discharging any of the pieces, I was not out of shot of their harquebus, and most times within speech of one another. And surely every man did well; and, as I have said, no doubt the slaughter and hurt they received was great, as time will show; and when every man was weary with labour, and our cartridges and ammunition expended —I think in some altogether—we ceased and followed the enemy, he bearing away still in the course as I have said before."

That the Spaniards were very thoroughly beaten, there is now no doubt; but at this time neither Howard nor Drake saw this so clearly as Wynter. Drake believed that the decisive battle had yet to be fought, and with full confidence in the result wrote to Walsyngham on the 31st—"With the grace of God, if we live, I doubt not but ere it be long so to handle the matter with the Duke of Sidonia that he shall wish himself at St. Mary Port among his orange trees." Howard had already written, on the very evening of the battle, to the same effect—"[All day] until this evening late, we have chased them in fight and distressed them much; but their fleet consists of mighty ships and great strength; yet we doubt not, by God's good assistance, to oppress them . . . Their force is wonderful great and strong; and yet we pluck their feathers by little and little." But even when the enemy were seen flying to the north, both Howard and Drake remained apprehensive that they might return after refitting in some of the Danish ports. Howard, too, was painfully conscious of the wants of his own fleet. He knew that his ships were very short of victuals, and that the powder was almost all expended.

But for this, he would have attacked the flying enemy on the next day; as it was, he could only "set on a brag countenance" and follow.

It is one of the persistent fictions of history that this most unseasonable want of powder was due to the parsimony of the queen, who cut short the supply on the ground of expense. In point of fact the ships not only had a great deal more than was customary, but had, amongst them, all that there was available in the kingdom. During the previous months, Walsyngham had been vainly endeavouring to purchase more in the Low Countries, though not perhaps for the ships; for neither he, nor Burghley, nor others of the queen's advisers then with her, could see that more might be wanted than the large supply already on board. Of naval war, they knew nothing beyond what they had read in their histories, and could not understand that a new phase of it, outside all former experience, was being developed. As early as the 30th March, indeed, Drake had written to the Council that "the supply of powder and shot for our great ordnance in her Majesty's ships is sufficient for only one day and a half's service, if it be begun and continued as the service may require . . . which in truth I judge to be about a third part of that which is needful"; but the Council apparently thought they knew better, and, either from want of faith or want of means, did not remedy the defect. If it is right for civilians and landsmen to control the expenditure of naval stores, they were, perhaps, warranted in their disbelief, for the expenditure in the battles was great beyond precedent, as is more fully shown by a letter of Howard's on the 8th August—"Some Spaniards that we have taken, that were in the fight of Lepanto, say that

the worst of our four fights that we have had with them far exceeded the fight they had there; and they say that in some of our fights we had fired twenty times as much great shot as they had there."

That this ignorance on the part of the Council was a ruling factor of their policy is evident from the instruction given to their messenger sent to the admiral on the 31st July, to ask as to the causes "why the Spanish navy has not been boarded by the queen's ships? For though," it continued, "some of the ships of Spain may be thought too huge to be boarded by the English, yet some of the queen's ships are thought very able to have boarded divers of the meaner ships of the Spanish navy." The answer may well have been that though some of the Spanish ships were too huge to be boarded, none of them were too huge to be pounded with great shot till they went to the bottom, were driven ashore on the Flemish coast, or, as shot-torn wrecks, fled into unknown seas to avoid the present danger. It was doubtless this official question or the train of thought which dictated it that was in Ralegh's mind when, some twenty years later, he wrote—

"He that will happily perform a fight at sea, must believe that there is more belonging to a good man of war[1] upon the waters than great daring, and must know that there is a great deal of difference between fighting loose or at large and grappling. To clap ships together without consideration belongs rather to a madman than to a man of war; for by such an ignorant bravery was Peter Strozzi lost at the Azores when he fought against the Marquis of Santa Cruz. In like manner had the Lord Charles Howard, Admiral of

[1] In its literal meaning, of "a fighting man"; not a ship.

England, been lost in the year 1588, if he had not been better advised than a great many malignant fools were, who found fault with his demeanour. The Spaniards had an army aboard them and he had none; they had more ships than he had, and of higher building and charging; so that had he entangled himself with those great and powerful vessels, he had greatly endangered this kingdom of England. . . . But our admiral knew his advantage and held it; which had he not done, he had not been worthy to have held his head."

For a man of Ralegh's genius to be wise after the event was a small matter. It was Howard's special merit to be wise before it; and, however much he might owe to the counsels of Drake and his fellows, to adopt and, in the face of powerful opposition, to adhere to the tactics which not only avoided defeat, but ensured victory.

After following the Armada as far as the latitude of the Firth of Forth, and seeing that the Spaniards made no attempt to turn south, and that, with the fresh south-westerly wind then blowing, it was impossible for them to make the coast of Scotland, Howard felt that the "brag countenance" had done all that was immediately called for, all that the lack of powder and of victuals permitted. That there was any serious suffering from want of food does not appear, but the dread of it compelled his return. And so, leaving the Spanish ships—now more than ever short-handed; their victuals putrid, their water expended; their hulls shattered, their masts wounded, their rigging cut, and their anchors left in Calais roads—to go to their doom in the northern or the western seas, Howard took the fleet safely back to Harwich and the Thames.

Here a more deadly enemy than Spaniards awaited

them. Already, whilst at Plymouth, a dire pestilence had raged on board several of the ships. Some of the worst had been cleared out and fumigated, but without any good effect. The contagion remained; and now, when the excitement of the battle was over, it broke out with greater virulence than ever. The men died by hundreds. The sick were sent ashore at Margate, but there was no provision for them; no lodging, no medical attendance, no proper diet. Howard did what he could, and at his own cost got them food and lodging; "but the best I can get," he wrote to Burghley, "is barns and such outhouses, and the relief is small that I can provide for them here. It would grieve any man's heart to see them that have served so valiantly to die so miserably." Before the plague was stayed the loss of men must have been numbered by thousands, and there was some anxiety as to what was to be done if the Armada should return; for the ships' companies were weakened by 30, 40, or even 50 per cent.

During the following years Howard had no active share in the operations of the war, although as lord admiral he was the head of the administration of the navy, and in 1590, in conjunction with Hawkyns and Drake, planned and instituted the grand naval charity, long known as "the Chest at Chatham," which was afterwards merged in Greenwich Hospital.[1] It was not till 1596, when the Spaniards were again preparing a formidable armada to renew the attempt on England, that Elizabeth, adopting the policy so strenuously urged by Howard in 1588, resolved to attack them in their own ports, and appointed

[1] The actual chest is preserved in the Museum of the Royal Naval College at Greenwich.

the lord admiral and the Earl of Essex joint commanders of an expedition against Cadiz. Their authority, as given by their commission, was equal, though Essex, as an earl, was named first. Then, and for long afterwards, civil rank took precedence over military.

On the 21st June the fleet forced its way into the harbour of Cadiz, the Spanish ships flying towards Puerto Real. Two of the largest were captured and sent to England, many of the others got on shore and were burnt; all would have been taken or destroyed, with cargoes of immense value, had it not been for the impetuosity of Essex, who, by landing in too great haste, permitted many of the ships to escape. The town was taken by storm and sacked, and all possibility of the Spaniards attempting the proposed invasion was, for the time, at an end. Essex would fain have visited the other ports along the coast, but Howard refused to do so, and the council of war agreed with him, alleging that their business was to destroy Spanish shipping, not to sack and plunder Spanish towns.

On their return to England, Howard was created Earl of Nottingham; the patent, dated the 22nd October, 1597, referring to his services against the Armada in 1588 as well as to his later service at Cadiz. This expedition, however, had left a strong feeling of antagonism between himself and Essex, which the promotion of Howard intensified. Essex arrogantly claimed the whole merit of the service, and was boisterously indignant at the precedence which Howard now took—a peer holding one of the highest offices of State taking precedence of all others of the same degree. The queen yielded to her favourite's demand, and

appointed him earl-marshal, thus restoring his precedence; but between the two the very bitter feeling remained. It is possible that the high esteem in which Howard was held at Court was a factor in the insubordination and rebellion of Essex in 1601; and, on the other hand, that the remembrance of old insults did not render Howard, as one of Essex's judges, more inclined to the side of mercy. It is, however, well established—if only by the utter want of any trustworthy evidence in support of it—that the celebrated story of the ring is pure fiction. The inherent improbability of every detail makes it curious that it should ever have received credence.

As long as the war with Spain lasted Howard retained his appointment as commander-in-chief of the fleet; and in 1599, on the rumour of another armada preparing—prepared—actually sailed—for the invasion of this country, he had a commission as "lord-lieutenant-general of all England," giving him the command-in-chief of all the forces of the realm, by sea and by land. And this almost regal authority he held for six weeks—sometimes afloat in the fleet, sometimes on shore with the army. During the queen's last years he was very much in her confidence. It may be that she recognized in him not only a near kinsman—which might not have counted for much—but the one man about the Court who served her for love of herself and of his country. He had no petty greed or ambition. His birth, rank, office, and reputation left him nothing further to desire for himself. On her death-bed the queen named to him the King of Scots as her successor, leaving to him the measures to be taken.

Howard had probably been already in correspondence

with James, and from the first held a high place in James' favour. He was continued in his office of lord admiral; he was a member of every commission of any importance, and more especially for the trial of the men concerned in the Gunpowder Plot, and for the negotiation of the peace with Spain. In March 1605 he was sent to Spain as ambassador extraordinary to interchange ratifications of the treaty. The splendour of his equipment and retinue dazzled the Spanish populace. His frank and liberal courtesy won all hearts. The prestige of his military achievements made everything smooth. On his return to England he continued as before, an adviser rather than a minister of the crown — except in his office of lord admiral. The last executive duty he undertook was to command, in 1613, the squadron which escorted the Princess Elizabeth to Flushing, on the occasion of her marriage to the Elector Palatine. The last commission on which he sat was one, in 1618, to revise the statutes of the Order of the Garter.

He was by this time an old man. Though he preserved his faculties to the last, it cannot be supposed that at the age of eighty-two he could attend to the details of his office; probably he had never considered it his duty to attend to them further than to receive the reports of his subordinates and of the "Principal Officers of the Navy," afterwards known as the Navy Board. Certainly in 1618, and for many years before that date, he had left things very much in their hands; and in the reign of James I the hands of such men were dirty. The affairs of every public office where money was, were in confusion—the admiralty equally with—not worse than others.

Commissions were appointed to inquire into these abuses; and on the report of the commission on the admiralty, Nottingham felt that the matter was beyond his failing powers. The Duke of Buckingham was eager to relieve him of his burden, and Nottingham retired with a pension of £1000 a year. The lord-lieutenancy of Surrey and various rich sinecures about the Court he held till his death, at the age of eighty-eight, on the 13th December, 1624. His family in the male line, and with it the Nottingham title, became extinct in 1681. The barony of Effingham passed to the descendants of his younger brother.

It is impossible to conclude this memoir of the Earl of Nottingham without mentioning his religion—a point which, as a rule, is outside the limits of our consideration. But so much political capital has been made, or attempted to be made, out of the reiterated assertion that he was a Roman Catholic, that it is only right to say that the statement is an invention of the present century; that it is supported by no evidence whatever; that there is very strong, though indirect, evidence against it; and that quite independent of any evidence, is the presumption that a man known to be continuously and persistently guilty of high treason under the statute 23 Eliz. c. 1, could not have held the office of lord admiral of England.

It is altogether outside our object to inquire what Nottingham's doctrinal opinions were, or whether he had any at all beyond a general acceptance of the Prayer-Book as established by the Act of Uniformity. The modern terms, Roman and Anglican Catholic, were not then in vogue; and the distinction was between a "papist" and a "pro-

testant"; a papist being one who acknowledged the authority of the pope; a protestant being one who protested against it. That Howard did not acknowledge the authority of the pope is as certain as anything short of an affidavit can make it; but the first and last of the following incidents, at widely different periods of his life, seem to show this more clearly, and are perhaps not very generally known.

In February 1588 a complaint was made to him that the surgeon—or, in the language of the day, the barber—of the ship, either Victory or White Bear, commanded by Lord Sheffield (Howard's nephew), was a papist. Howard desired Sheffield to inquire into this, and wrote afterwards to Walsyngham that the barber and three or four more suspected men had been examined on oath, and that "they utterly renounced the pope's authority"; that, two or three years ago, the barber "was something inclined to papistry," but had been "converted" by his wife's "honest" relations. "I have talked with the man myself. He offers to receive [the Holy Communion] and do anything that a good protestant should do . . . And this I dare assure you: no man whosoever is readier to communicate than my Lord Sheffield is, which I thank God for." It can scarcely be alleged that Howard was a "papist" when he wrote this letter; or in 1605, when he sat on the commission for the trial of Henry Garnett, or for discovering and expelling all catholic priests from the kingdom; or yet in 1623, when, as lord-lieutenant of Surrey, he reported to the Archbishop of Canterbury that John Monson, the son of Sir William Monson, was a "most dangerous papist," and that he had therefore committed him to the Gatehouse.

The question is here referred to only because the assertion that Howard was a "catholic"—that is, a "papist"—has been adduced as an illustration of the loyalty and trustworthiness of the catholics as a body. As Howard was assuredly not a catholic—in the sense of "papist," his services do not illustrate or prove anything of the kind. With the attitude of the catholics in 1588 we are not now concerned.

DRAKE

DRAKE.

II

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

AMONG the many commanders at sea which the reign of Queen Elizabeth produced, Drake stands out conspicuously by his daring exploits and force of character. His whole life reads like a romance and is full of interest and instruction, as showing how the will, determination, and skill of one man can influence those under his command to attempt, and to carry to a successful issue projects which, on the face of them, appear foolhardy, or impossible of attainment.

Francis Drake, of a good though impoverished family, was born at Crowndale near Tavistock, somewhere about 1540, probably a year or two later. From childhood he was brought up to the sea, at first in a coasting vessel, afterwards in voyages to Africa and the Spanish Main.

In 1567 he commanded the Judith of 50 tons, one of a squadron fitted out by his kinsman John Hawkyns. They sailed from Plymouth on the 2nd October. The object of the voyage was to capture negroes in Africa, carry them across to the Spanish Main, and there sell them to the planters, who, in spite of the opposition of the authorities, were ready to buy them at a good price. The

adventure proved highly successful; and Hawkyns, having gained "vast treasure in gold, silver, and jewels," turned homewards. But it was late in the season; the little squadron encountered heavy gales and was finally driven to take refuge in the harbour of San Juan de Lua, not far from Vera Cruz, and at that time the chief port of Mexico. Here, after having been permitted to commence their refit, they were treacherously attacked by an overwhelming Spanish force. After a fierce fight, Hawkyns' ship, the Jesus, was set on fire; two others, the Angel and Swallow, were sunk; Hawkyns had got on board the Minion, which, with the Judith, made her escape, crowded with men, and short of water and provisions. It was impossible to go on as they were, but one hundred of them volunteered to land and take their chance. They reached a Spanish station and were sent as prisoners to Mexico.

At first they were treated with humanity, and were gradually employed in the plantations, even in places of trust and emolument. But three years afterwards the Inquisition arrived, and these men—more especially those who had got together some money—were hunted out, examined, tortured, some burnt in an *auto-da-fé*, some sent to Spain and handed over to the tender mercies of the Holy Office at Seville. Gradually all this leaked out; a feeling of horror and indignation at such atrocities perpetrated in the name of religion was aroused throughout the country; and to English sailors it became a solemn duty to avenge their comrades and to fight the Spaniards whenever they could meet them.

The Minion and Judith made the best of their way to England, the latter reaching Plymouth towards the end of

January. The Minion, which had lost most of her crew through sickness, was a few days later. As soon as he arrived, Drake was sent up to London to inform Sir William Cecil of what had been done, and was thus brought to the notice of the great minister. All England rang with the gallant fight at San Juan de Lua, and the treachery of the Spaniards was vehemently denounced. Drake, robbed of the fortune which had seemed already his when he entered the harbour of San Juan de Lua, is supposed to have served during the summer as master of one of the queen's ships, whilst he endeavoured to obtain some compensation for his losses; but—

"finding that no recompense could be recovered out of Spain by any of his own means, or by her Majesty's letters, he used such helps as he might, by two several voyages into the West Indies, in the years 1570 and 1571, to gain such intelligence as might further him to get some amends for his loss. And having in these two voyages gotten certain notice of the persons and places aimed at as he thought requisite, he thereupon with good deliberation resolved on a third voyage."

His equipment consisted of two small ships, the Pasha and Swan, carrying in all seventy-three men, and also three pinnaces made in pieces, which could easily be put together when required. On the 24th May, 1572, he sailed from Plymouth, intending to attack Nombre de Dios, then "the granary of the West Indies, where the golden harvest brought from Peru and Mexico to Panama was hoarded up till it could be conveyed to Spain."

On the 6th July they sighted the high land about Santa Marta, and putting into a secluded port on the coast,

they set up the pinnaces, and being joined by an English bark with thirty men commanded by one James Ranse, who agreed to make common cause with them, they put to sea on the 20th. At the Isle of Pines, they left Ranse and his company in charge of the ships, whilst Drake, with his seventy-three men, embarked in the pinnaces and arrived off Nombre de Dios about three o'clock on the morning of the 29th July.

The surprise was complete, and they landed without opposition; but the Spaniards speedily took alarm and mustered in the market-place. A sharp skirmish resulted in the Spaniards being put to flight, but Drake was severely wounded in the thigh. They then compelled some prisoners to conduct them to the governor's house, where they found an enormous stack of silver bars, valued at over a million sterling. To attempt to carry away any sufficient part of this in their small boats was impossible; but there was still the treasure-house in which was stored the gold, pearls, and jewels, "more," said Drake to his followers, "than the pinnaces could carry." They passed on to it; but the Spaniards were now rapidly gathering their forces; Drake's men were enormously outnumbered, and they began to be afraid of being surrounded and cut off from their boats. Drake would not hear of retreat. He told his men that he had brought them to the mouth of the "treasure of the world," and if they did not take advantage of the opportunity, they must henceforth blame no one but themselves. With that he ordered the door to be broken open; but as he stepped forward to keep the crowd back, he fainted from loss of blood. His men, who had not known he was wounded and now thought he was

dead, lost heart, and without more ado, picked him up and carried him down to the boats.

So this audacious attempt failed, and the party returned to their ships empty-handed and dispirited. But Drake was soon about again, and finding fresh work to do. Parting company from Ranse, he made for Cartagena, captured a large ship in the very harbour, took and destroyed many others, and burned Porto Bello. Then fever broke out among his men, and twenty-eight died, including his brother Joseph. Another brother, John, was killed. The two ships were beyond the strength of their diminishing numbers, and the Swan was scuttled. But through all, Drake's courage never failed.

On the 3rd February, 1573, leaving the sick and a few sound men to look after them, Drake landed on the isthmus with only eighteen men; and being joined by a party of Cimaroons, he started to intercept the treasure trains as they crossed over from Panama to Nombre de Dios. One rich train was missed through the impetuosity of a drunken man. Vera Cruz was sacked, but little plunder was obtained to compensate for the excessive toil and danger they had gone through. On the 1st April, however, they intercepted three caravans with a load of nearly thirty tons of silver and a quantity of gold. They carried away as much of this as they could, burying the rest; but before they could return for it, it was discovered by the Spaniards and retaken. After many adventures and hair-breadth escapes, they reached the ships safely and made sail for Plymouth, where they arrived, after a prosperous voyage, on Sunday the 9th August, 1573.

One little incident of his march across the isthmus had

given a special direction to Drake's thoughts. On the 11th February, having arrived at the summit of a considerable eminence, the chief of the Indians pointed out to him "a goodly and great high tree," in which they had cut steps to ascend by, and at the top was a kind of platform to hold ten or twelve men. Drake climbed up and obtained a view of the Atlantic on one side, and the Pacific on the other, the unknown waters of the latter ocean glittering in the sun as far as eye could reach. He was, it is said, "so vehemently transported with desire to navigate that sea, that falling down there on his knees, he implored the Divine assistance, that he might at some time or other sail thither and make a perfect discovery of the same."

Though in consequence of Drake's swoon at Nombre de Dios, his ships did not return with the "treasure of the world," as he had hoped and intended, they had, nevertheless, brought home a very large amount of bullion, Drake's share of which rendered him a comparatively rich man. For the next three years (1573-6) he served in Ireland, sometimes afloat, sometimes ashore, under the Earl of Essex; but his thoughts were ever turned to the great Southern Ocean, and after the Earl's death he began to make preparations for another voyage.

He had already attracted the notice of Burghley, and had been permitted to recount some of his adventures to the queen herself. It is not improbable that he received encouragement to further enterprise, though in guarded terms; but the story that the queen herself told Drake she was ready to subscribe a thousand crowns towards the expenses of an expedition to the South Sea, seems very doubtful; she might be delighted at the pros-

pect of showing Philip that he was vulnerable where he held himself most secure; but neither then, nor for long afterwards, could she make up her mind to be openly hostile to Spain, though well aware that whenever men of the two nations met on the high seas or away from their respective countries, they fought as a matter of course. This vacillating policy, which led to the issue of undecided or contradictory orders, hampered every expedition that was undertaken under the queen's authority; whilst the rigid parsimony crippled it, by withholding even the most ordinary necessaries of food and munition of war. But nothing could damp the spirit of adventure that was roused in the nation; and the cruel persecutions of the Inquisition engendered such a hatred of the Spaniards, that every English sailor taking part in the expeditions sent forth by private enterprise, felt that he was engaged in a holy crusade.

Drake's reputation stood high, and he had friends in high places. He had thus no difficulty in getting together a squadron, which, petty as it seems now, was fully adequate, according to the standard of the age. It consisted of the Pelican of 100 tons, the Elizabeth of 80 tons commanded by Captain John Wynter—a nephew, apparently, of Sir William's—and three smaller vessels, the Marigold, Swan, and Christopher. They were well fitted out, and carried, as in former expeditions, some pinnaces in pieces, to be put together when required. Nor had Drake any intention of "roughing it" more than was necessary. His cabin furniture, his service of plate—engraved with his arms—his immediate surroundings, are described as splendid and even luxurious; not so much to

gratify his personal tastes as with the "idea of impressing foreigners with the magnificence of his native country." The crews, all told, numbered about 170. Drake himself was in the prime of his strength, about thirty-five years old, full of energy and daring. He is described as —"low of stature, but set and strong grown;[1] a very religious man towards God and His honour, chaste in his life, just in his dealings, true of his word, merciful to those that were under him, and hating nothing so much as idleness." After a false start, in which they were driven back by a storm and the loss of the Pelican's mainmast, they finally sailed from Plymouth on the 13th December, 1577. England at that time was full of Spanish spies, and Drake's movements had excited their liveliest interest. The secret, however, was safely kept, for no one knew it outside the very small circle of the principal adventurers. Whether even Burghley knew it is very doubtful. It was given out that they were bound to the Mediterranean; but it was not clear why ships bound to the Mediterranean should be taking such a heavy armament, so that this was looked upon as a false trail; and the belief among the Spaniards was that something was to be attempted in the West Indies—not improbably against Nombre de Dios. And thus it was reported to Philip.

It does not appear that even in the squadron itself any one knew more than the current rumour, or supposed that the enterprise, though on a somewhat larger scale than usual, was of any very unusual character. The former failure at Nombre de Dios was a sufficient explanation of

[1] [This bull-like chest is a marked feature in all the portraits, differing very much in other respects.]

the greater force now mustered. Not until they had passed the Cape Verd Islands did the men learn that they were bound to the coast of Brazil. The rendezvous appointed for the ships in case of separation, was the River Plate. When it further became known that from the Plate, Drake's purpose was to pass through the Straits of Magellan and traverse the Pacific Ocean, the news was not altogether welcome. A raid through the West Indies or on the Spanish Main was one thing; a prolonged voyage in unknown seas was another, to which many in the squadron were decidedly opposed. And some, at any rate, of these were of the better class; gentlemen volunteers who dreaded the discomforts and hardships now rising before them. There may have been other reasons. Some of the gentlemen who had served as soldiers may have thought that it was their place to command rather than to obey, and least of all to obey mere seamen. It is suggested, too, that personal quarrels or political intrigues may have complicated the question. It is impossible to speak with any certainty.

Amongst the volunteers was one Thomas Doughty, who is said to have served with Drake in Ireland, to have been on familiar terms with him, and to have entered on this voyage as Drake's friend. This Doughty is described as a man of education—a scholar. He may have been a Templar before he was a soldier, and thus have now become that thing most objectionable in the eyes of a sailor—a sea-lawyer. He seems to have imagined that he commanded the soldiers of the expedition, as Drake commanded the sailors, and to have flattered himself that his authority was equal to Drake's; but amidst much

lying and false witness, it is difficult to speak positively as to any of the details. The bare facts appear pretty certain.

Shortly after leaving St. Iago, Doughty, as Drake's friend, was put in command of a Portuguese prize. His overbearing conduct excited discontent; and when he was removed, first to one ship and then to another, he tried to rouse a feeling against Drake, to persuade the men that they were being hurried to their death, that the supernatural powers were fighting against them, and that to continue the voyage was flying in the face of the Almighty. It has been said that he had shipped solely with the intention of putting a stop to the voyage. Nothing is known except that, till after passing the Cape Verd Islands, he was on friendly terms with Drake—that Drake had no suspicion of any ill intent. It is, at least, more probable that he was actuated by anger at being superseded from the command of the prize and by dislike of being carried on a much longer, harder, and more adventurous voyage than he had bargained for. That he endeavoured to stir up a mutiny, to persuade the men to make Drake a prisoner, possibly to kill him or maroon him, and return to England, appears to have been proved. Drake at any rate believed all this, and on arriving at Port St. Julian, a small bay a little to the north of the Straits of Magellan, he had Doughty brought to trial by a court composed of all the principal men of the squadron —gentlemen, petty officers, and even seamen, to the number of forty. He was found guilty, and the court decided that "they could by no means, with their safety, let him live."

The place was one of evil omen. It was there, that fifty-eight years before, Magellan had had to crush out a dangerous mutiny by hanging one of his captains and putting three others to death in a less formal manner. The remains of the gallows were still standing; the bleached skeletons still bore silent witness to the tragedy of the past, now to be linked to the tragedy of the present.

So on one of the last days of June 1578 Doughty was ordered to prepare for execution. It was in every way an extraordinary scene. Doughty had played and lost in a game where life was the stake. He was ready to pay like a gentleman. And Drake, who had won, acquitted him of the personal offence. Side by side they knelt and received the Communion, and afterwards "dined also at the same table together, as cheerfully in sobriety as ever in their lives they had done afore time, each cheering up the other, and taking their leave by drinking to each other, as if some journey had only been in hand." And after some private conference with Drake, the condemned man was led to the place of execution and, with all due form, beheaded; Drake calling out, as the head fell, "Lo! this is the end of traitors."

The bad weather of the winter detained the ships at St. Julian's; but the execution of Doughty did not immediately kill—perhaps, indeed, it rather quickened—the feeling of jealousy between the gentlemen and the sailors. When weeks passed by and the disorder did not seem likely to cure itself, Drake judged it time to interfere, and on Sunday the 10th August, he usurped the preacher's place with a "Soft, Master Fletcher, I must preach this day myself;" and having assembled the whole force he

addressed them in a speech that has long been classical; and after dwelling on the difficulties before them, the necessity of harmony and good agreement, the danger of discord, he continued—

"By the life of God, it doth even take my wits from me to think of it. Here is such controversy between the sailors and the gentlemen, and such stomaching between the gentlemen and sailors that it doth even make me mad to hear it. But I must have it left. I must have the gentleman to haul and draw with the mariner and the mariner with the gentleman. Let us show ourselves all to be of a company, and let us not give occasion to the enemy to rejoice at our decay and overthrow. I would know him[1] that would refuse to set his hand to a rope; but I know that there is not any such here. And as gentlemen are necessary for government's sake in the voyage, so have I shipped them to that and to some further intent; and yet though I know sailors to be the most envious people in the world and so unruly without government, yet may I not be without them."

And with more words to similar effect, he concluded by offering the Marigold to carry the faint-hearted back to England. All protested their readiness to go on; and a week later the little squadron sailed from Port St. Julian.

In laying down the rule that the gentlemen must work with the mariners, that he would have no class distinction, Drake was merely enunciating his own practice, well-known to all his hearers; and Master Fletcher—the preacher and the historian of the voyage—after telling how, some days before they put into St. Julian's, Drake, whilst away in a small boat, examining into the suitability

[1] *Sc.* Let me see the man that will refuse, etc.

of a harbour, had been nearly lost by the sudden coming on of bad weather and of fog, continued—

"Our general, especially in matters of moment, was never wont to rely on other men's care, however trusty or skilful they might seem to be; but always, scorning danger and refusing no toil, he was wont himself to be first, whoever was second, at every turn where courage, skill, or industry was to be employed; neither would he intrust the discovery of these dangers to another, but rather to his own experience in searching out and sounding of them."

The two small vessels—the Christopher and the Swan—and the Portuguese prize had been broken up for firewood, as being unfit for the dangers now to be met. And these were of a nature to give pause to the boldest. No English ship had as yet passed Magellan's Straits, and for the last fifty years the Spaniards had avoided them as too perilous. Cape Horn was undiscovered. Tierra del Fuego was supposed to be part of a solid continent which extended to the Antarctic Pole, with a single narrow channel through it giving access to the Pacific Ocean. There were no charts, no records of past experience available to them. It was known that Magellan had passed through; and that was all. But still they sailed, as they said, "in great hope of a happy issue to our enterprise which Almighty God had hitherto so blessed and prospered." On the 20th August they were at the entrance of the Straits. Here Drake caused the ships to strike their topsails in honour to the Queen, and changed the name of his ship from the Pelican to the Golden Hind, after the crest of his friend and patron, Sir Christopher Hatton.

They had a very favourable passage through the Straits; for they came out into the Pacific Ocean on the 6th September, only seventeen days from the time they entered the Straits. This may be considered most remarkable, when we think that the passage was entirely unknown to any of them, and that it was not beaten by a sailing ship for more than 250 years. Wallis in 1766 took 121 days; Carteret, in the same year, 119; it was not until 1843 that the Fisgard, commanded by Captain Duntz, got through in sixteen days. It is, indeed, said in one account that Drake had Spanish charts. If so, they do not seem to have been of much use—rather the contrary, for the same writer says —"We, following the directions of the common maps of the Spaniards, were utterly deceived; for of malicious purpose they had made the maps false that they might deceive strangers." The Spaniards may have been quite capable of intending this elaborate deception, but with the fact, ignorance had certainly more to do than malice, for no living Spaniard knew anything about the passage.

After leaving the Straits the intention was to push on for a warmer climate; but their good fortune deserted them, and they encountered a gale the day after entering the so-called Pacific Ocean. For six weeks they were battered to and fro, in bitter and fierce winds. On the 20th September, the little Marigold foundered with her captain and crew of twenty-eight good men. From the 7th September until the 7th October they did not see any land, and had been blown as far south as Lat. 57° and then back again until near the entrance of the Straits, where they were nearly wrecked in trying to find an anchorage. Then the Elizabeth parted company, and

managing to get into the Straits again, Wynter called a council in his cabin and proposed to return to England. The rendezvous was on the coast, in the latitude of Valparaiso; but Wynter believed Drake to have been lost; he was sickened and disheartened by the terrible experience they had gone through; the way home was comparatively easy; and though his men wished to go on, Wynter overruled them, and repassing the Straits, coasted along Brazil, and finally reached England in June of the following year, 1579.

Meantime Drake, in the Golden Hind, was driven south again by another gale, and was forced, as it were, to make his great discovery—that of Cape Horn. Hitherto the idea had been that there was land as far as the South Pole, and that Magellan's Straits was the only route from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and *vice versâ*. Magellan himself had stated this, and had named the land to the southward Terra Incognita.

Besides giving out that there was no other passage into the Pacific from the east except through the Straits of Magellan, the Spaniards had declared that there was a strong and constant current running through the Straits from west to east. When we think that the sole information possessed at this time about the passage was derived from the Spaniards, and that—in addition to their ignorance—their one object was to make it appear unapproachable, it is possible to form an idea of the dauntless spirit of adventure that animated Drake and his men. And through all, they were supported by the quaint child-like sense of religion and belief in a protecting Providence, which dictated such a sentence as this—

"Now as we were fallen to the uttermost parts of these islands [to the southward of Tierra del Fuego], on the 28th October, 1578, our troubles did make an end, the storm ceased, and all our calamities (only the absence of our friends excepted) were removed, as if God all this while by His secret Providence had led us to make this discovery, which being made according to His will, He stayed His hand."

In his solitary ship, Drake now shaped his course along the land to Lat. 30°, which was the rendezvous appointed in the Pacific. Think of the audacity of the man, in that poor little craft with but sixty men on board, 7000 miles from home, starting to cruise along a coast of which he knew nothing except through confused and misleading rumours; a coast that had been conquered and more or less settled by the Spaniards for forty years, and where he would now be sure to find large numbers of Spanish soldiers, and many Spanish ships larger than his own. It was hazardous work, with no loophole for escape in case of failure.

Of this eventuality, Drake and his company did not stop to think. They coasted along, landing occasionally to get water and birds, and at Mocha, where the Indians, mistaking them for Spaniards, shot at them with arrows and—amongst others—wounded Drake in the face; and so continued their voyage to the north, looking out anxiously for the Elizabeth as they neared the rendezvous. Of course they did not fall in with the Elizabeth; but they had news of a great galleon lying at Valparaiso.

They sailed into the bay. The Spanish seamen, who could not conceive the possibility of strangers being in these waters, prepared a friendly reception, and were only

undeceived when the Golden Hind ranged up alongside, and the English sailors leaped on board. Taken entirely by surprise, there was no resistance; one of the crew sprang overboard and alarmed the town ; the inhabitants made for the hills; Drake landed, carried off what portable booty he could find, and then went off to sea with his prize and "rummaged" her.

Continuing their northerly course, they called at Coquimbo for water, but the Spaniards, coming down in force, drove them back, with the loss of one man. A post was sent off by land to Peru, to give warning that enemies were on the coast, but travelling was so bad that Drake was there a month before it arrived. They now put together a pinnace, which, as they sailed north, kept close in shore, searching all likely places to find water. At Iquique, they found an unsuspecting Spaniard lying asleep near the landing-place, with thirteen bars of silver by him ; they relieved him of his charge. A little further along, they met a Spaniard and an Indian boy driving llamas, on which were bound leathern bags of refined silver. This was transferred to the hold of the ship, and also some silver found in two barks at Arica. On the 15th February they arrived at Callao, the principal seaport of Peru, and anchored at night in the middle of a great number of Spanish ships. Next morning there was a panic, and apparently little or no resistance ; so after overhauling the ships and taking out their valuables, their masts were cut away and also their cables, so as to prevent all possibility of pursuit. The booty was already great ; but news was obtained that a galleon, richly laden, had sailed for Panama about a fortnight before, and no time was lost

in following her. Next day they were off, carrying all sail when there was wind, and towing with the boats when it was calm. On the 20th February they were off Payta, and looked in ; also at the entrance of Guayaquil River on the 24th. Hereabouts, they met a bark laden with rope and ship's stores, which came in very handy ; also 80 pounds weight of gold. Taking what they wanted, they let her go and hurried after the treasure-ship. Drake promised a gold chain to whoever sighted her first. It was won by a kinsman of his own, who sighted her near Cape San Francisco on the 1st March. By peculiarities in her rig, which they had heard of at Callao, she was recognized as the ship they were looking out for—the Cacafuego, which may be translated Spitfire. Quite unconscious of any cause for anxiety she was jogging along slowly and comfortably to her destination. The little ship coming up astern was considered to be a friend, and glad of company on that lonely ocean, the galleon shortened sail to wait for her. Knowing, however, that if he approached the Spaniard by daylight, he would be recognized as a stranger and therefore an enemy, Drake, whilst carrying a press of sail as though eager to join her, effectually checked the speed of his ship by towing some casks astern. At dusk these were cut adrift, and the Golden Hind quickly coming up to the galleon, ranged up alongside and hailed her to "heave to." No attention was paid to this unexpected demand, and a broadside followed that brought down the galleon's mainmast ; her captain was wounded, and, completely taken by surprise, she surrendered. The two ships' heads were turned seaward, and next morning, being out of sight of land, the prize was overhauled.

The full value of the spoil was never accurately confessed. Whether even the queen ever knew it may be doubted. Twenty-six tons of coined silver and about one hundredweight of gold was scheduled; but there was a further mass, of which no account was rendered, besides a great store of pearls, emeralds, and diamonds. The two ships remained in company for six days, and during that time the wounded Spanish captain, who was on board with Drake, and was kindly treated by him, amused himself by studying the manners of the people into whose hands he had so strangely fallen. An account of his experiences has been preserved, and is very interesting. He thought the Golden Hind, though showing signs of rough service, to be admirably appointed and thoroughly seaworthy, and he observed that Drake was greatly feared and reverenced by all on board.

Drake seems to have spoken freely of his voyage. The Spaniard asked him how he proposed to return to England; the reply was that there were three ways—the one by which he had come, that by China and the Cape of Good Hope, and then there was a third route which he could not acquaint him with. Drake casually remarked to the Spanish captain—

"I know that the viceroy will send for thee to inform himself of my proceedings: thou mayest tell him he shall do well to put no more Englishmen to death, and to spare those four he has now in his hands, for if he do execute them, they shall cost the life of two thousand Spaniards."

Having cleared the galleon, whose name, said the pilot, should no longer be Spitfire but *Cacaplata*—Spit-silver—Drake restored her to her captain, and then shaped a course

to the north. He suspected that the Spaniards would be on the look-out if he returned by the Straits of Magellan, and proposed to his ship's company that they should try and find the passage to the Atlantic through North America.[1] He was right about the Spaniards. After his visit to Callao the viceroy hastily fitted out three ships, embarked 250 men in them, and sent them in pursuit. They did not arrive at the place where Drake took the galleon until twenty days after the event; it does not appear that they were very anxious to overtake him. Ascertaining that he had not gone to Panama, they concluded he had turned to go home by the Straits of Magellan, and went south to look for him. Meanwhile Drake was making his way north, taking on the way a ship from Acapulco, laden with silk stuffs, porcelain, etc., and another, from which they obtained what was then of more value to them—a pilot and chart of the China seas. Guatulco they surprised, and holding some of the chief men as hostages, they filled up with water and provisions.

On April 16 they started again, and between that date and the 3rd June they ran 4200 miles, and found themselves in Lat. 42° N. They began to suffer terribly from cold, and, in the words of the preacher, "a great discouragement seized upon the minds of our men." Drake persisted for some time; but the weather continued unfavourable; the cold was brought by a strong north-west wind, and the

[1] [The mythical Straits of Anian. The report was probably quite honest, made originally by some adventurous navigator, who, entering by the Straits of San Juan de Fuca, passed between Vancouver's Island and the mainland. When he came out into the open sea he considered the problem solved, only instead of making his way to Spain, he turned back through the Straits and returned to Acapulco and Callao.]

idea of going further north had to be abandoned. They put into a creek near the modern San Francisco, where the natives were very friendly, and seemed to have considered they were receiving a visit from the gods. Their king invested Drake with full authority over the country, which

"our general named Albion (or as it was generally written New Albion), and that for two causes; the one, in respect of the white banks and cliffs which lie toward the sea; the other, that it might have some affinity even in name to our own country, which was sometimes so called."

On the 23rd July, 1579, much to the sorrow of the natives, they sailed from New Albion; and Drake not caring to run any more risks with his precious cargo, decided to return by the Cape of Good Hope. The charts which he had found in his prizes now became most valuable, and by their help and his own skill he hoped to find his way. For sixty-eight days they ran on without seeing land, and then came to some islands, probably some of the Caroline group. On the 3rd November they sighted the Moluccas and called at Ternate, where they were well received by the natives. After six days, they started to feel their way through the dangerous reefs and shoals, amongst which they were entangled for a month. On the 10th January, 1580, just as they were congratulating themselves on having found a clear passage out, and thinking they were clear of dangers, they stuck hard and fast on one of the coral reefs that rise like a wall out of the deep waters. Drake went away sounding to see if an anchor could be laid out, but even at a boat's length from the ship could find no bottom. Luckily for them the wind was light and the sea smooth; the ship was lightened, and in the afternoon of the next day the

wind shifted, and she slipped off into deep water not much the worse. For two months more they beat about among the islands, having many a narrow escape, but at last they found a convenient harbour in the island of Java, where the people were kind to them. There they cleaned the ship's bottom from the barnacles with which it was overgrown. On the 26th March they sailed again, and passing through the Straits of Sunda, met the great ocean swell that told them they were at last in the open sea and clear of coral reefs. No land was seen for nearly two months, and then they made the African coast about where Natal is now. And so, past the Cape, past Sierra Leone; and on the 26th September, 1580—

"We safely, with joyful minds and thankful hearts to God, arrived at Plymouth, the place of our first setting forth, after we had spent two years, ten months, and some few odd days in seeing the wonders of the Lord in the deep, in discovering so many admirable things, in going through with so many strange adventures, in escaping so many dangers, and overcoming so many difficulties in this our encompassing of this globe, and passing round the world."

Eighteen months had passed since Drake had been heard of, beyond a rumour that he had been taken by the Spaniards and hanged. Wynter, in the summer of 1579, had brought the news that he had passed into the Pacific; but it seemed probable that the Golden Hind had been lost in the gale. Later on, however, news from the Viceroy of Mexico had been laid before the queen by the Spanish ambassador, with formal complaints of Drake's doings. The queen appears to have protested that Drake was a

private adventurer, and that if ever he came home he would be severely dealt with. And little more was then thought about the matter. But suddenly the subject was revived in a very practical form, by the appearance of Drake, in his little ship ballasted with silver, and having sailed round the world. There was no mistaking the feeling of the nation. A shout of admiration rose over the whole country. The queen hesitated; she wrote to Edmund Tremayne at Plymouth, to assist Drake in sending up certain bullion brought into the realm by him. In replying to which command Tremayne mentioned incidentally that the value was reported to be a million and a half sterling. At the same time an inquiry was made into Drake's conduct, the depositions of the whole ship's company tending to prove that no barbarity could be laid to his charge.

Many, however, clamoured against Drake. The queen finally inclined to the popular side. To the Spanish ambassador who demanded restitution of the property and punishment of the offenders, she replied, in effect, that the Spaniards, by ill treatment of her subjects and by prohibiting commerce, contrary to the custom of nations, had provoked these measures; that Drake should be forthcoming to answer for his misdeeds, if he should be shown to have committed any; that the treasure should be stored pending inquiries, though she considered large sums were due to her on account of money spent in subduing rebellions, set on foot by the Spaniards, both in England and Ireland; above all, that she absolutely denied the pretensions of the Spaniards to the whole of America by virtue of the donation of the Bishop of Rome, or their right or power over the people of other nations trading or colonizing in

parts which they had not settled; and finally that the oceans must be permitted to be freely navigated, "seeing that the use of sea and air is common to all, and neither nature, nor public use, nor custom, permit any possession thereof."

So Drake went to London and told his adventures to the queen; his little ship came round to Deptford, and on the 4th April, 1581, on her deck, Queen Elizabeth knighted the first man of any nation who had commanded through such a voyage. For many long years the Golden Hind was preserved at Deptford as a monument of the voyage.

During 1582 Drake was Mayor of Plymouth. He also sat in Parliament as member for Bossiney, 1584-5, and largely, if not entirely, at his own expense, constructed the leat which supplied Plymouth with water. All this time affairs with Spain were seething. Philip was gathering ships together and making preparations for the invasion of England. He was, however, by no means determined, and the queen, though well aware of what was going on, was unwilling to do anything which would force his determination. It was so much simpler and ever so much cheaper (as far as she was concerned) to let the war wage itself at the cost and risk of her loving subjects. This motive of economy, added to difficulties in the political situation, goes far to explain the apparent timidity and indecision of her conduct, in spite of the representations that were made to her.

In 1585 her hand was forced. The King of Spain laid an embargo on all English ships and goods found in his country. The queen retaliated by letters of reprisal and by ordering the equipment of a fleet of twenty-five sail "to

avenge the wrongs offered to her, and to resist the King of Spain's preparations." Drake was in command in the Elizabeth Bonaventure, and had with him Frobiser as vice-admiral, and Francis Knollys as rear-admiral. General Carleill and ten companies of soldiers were embarked. From various causes, however, the expedition was delayed, and it seemed doubtful whether the queen might not after all countermand it.

Both Burghley and Walsyngham were afraid of this; and Burghley privately sent word to Drake that he had better get away as soon as possible if he wanted to go at all. On the 14th September the fleet sailed. They called first at Vigo, and then on to the Cape Verd Islands. They took possession of St. Iago; and before leaving, utterly destroyed it, in revenge for the murder and mutilation of a ship's boy, who had strayed away and been caught. Then the squadron made for the West Indies. They called at Dominica, spent Christmas at St. Christopher's, and on New Year's Day, 1586, landed in force on Hispaniola and took and ransomed the town of San Domingo. From San Domingo the expedition passed on to Cartagena, which they occupied after a sharp struggle, and ransomed after they had been there six weeks.

Then yellow fever broke out, and the men began to drop with frightful rapidity. Drake's personal influence, courage, and energy alone kept them together. Out of the original strength of 2500 men, but 700 remained fit for duty; and Drake, who had intended attacking Nombre de Dios and then marching across the Isthmus to Panama, was reluctantly compelled to admit that such enterprises were now beyond their strength, and turned homewards. On the way

they called at the Virginian colony which had been founded the year before, largely at the cost of Sir Walter Ralegh. Drake proposed to supply the colonists with stores and also to leave them a small vessel; but they were utterly disheartened, and begged to be taken back to England: so they were all embarked, and the squadron arrived at Portsmouth on the 28th July, 1586. The booty brought home was small; so small, that after the expenses were paid, the crews received but a few pounds a man, although the officers had generously given up their share to them. But if the result as an investment was poor, from the point of view of impending war, the destruction of the Spanish settlements, and the heavy blow to Spanish trade produced a great effect, which would probably have been much greater had the queen been able to make up her mind to a total breach with Spain and to follow it up.

Drake was not long left idle. The hostile preparations of Spain could no longer be ignored, and it was felt in England that the long-expected blow was about to fall. Almost immediately on his return, the shipping of Plymouth was placed under his orders; and in 1587 he had command of a strong squadron of queen's ships and merchantmen, with a commission—

"to impeach the joining together of the King of Spain's fleet out of their several ports, to keep victuals from them, to follow them in case they should come forward toward England or Ireland, and to cut off as many of them as he could and impeach their landing, as also to set upon such as should either come out of the West or East Indies into Spain, or go out of Spain thither."

He sailed on the 2nd April, but had hardly left before

the queen repented of her determination; and on the 9th April orders were sent off for Drake "to confine his operations to the capture of ships on the open sea, and to forbear entering any of the ports or havens of Spain, or to do any act of hostility by land." These orders did not, however, reach Drake, and he proceeded in the most prompt manner to carry out those with which he had sailed.

Arriving off Cadiz on the 19th, and finding—as had been reported—a large number of Spanish ships collected, but neither fully manned, nor armed, nor equipped, he dashed in among them, sank or burnt thirty-three, many of them large ships, and took away four laden with provisions. On the 1st May he sailed again, having, as he said, "singed the King of Spain's beard for him." The daring rapidity of the enterprise astonished all Europe, and even forced expressions of admiration from the Spaniards themselves.

The only jarring note came from Drake's own squadron. His second in command, Borough, a good old sailor and pilot, but unused to war as Drake had learned to make it, was aghast at his commander's reckless proceedings. He complained that his advice was not taken, and eventually placed his grievances on paper. After complaining that though Drake had often assembled his captains, it was only to tell them what he intended to do, to regale them with good cheer, and let them go, without giving them an opportunity of criticizing, he went on—"I have found you always so wedded to your own opinion and will, that you rather disliked, and showed as it were offensive unto you, that any should give you advice in anything." At the time this was written Drake was contemplating an attack on Sagres, and Borough proceeded to object altogether to

such a foolhardy proceeding. Drake replied by placing his vice-admiral under arrest; and very uncomfortable Borough must have felt, for he wrote afterwards—"All this time I stood ever in doubt of my life, and did expect daily when the admiral would have executed upon me his bloodthirsty desire, as he did upon Doughty."

The attack on Sagres was successfully carried out. Shortly after, the Lion, Borough's flagship, parted company and returned to England—run away with by her crew, it was said; the vice-admiral declaring that, having been displaced by Drake, he had no longer any authority. Drake was extremely angry, and when he, too, came to England, he would fain have had Borough tried on a charge of mutiny and desertion. Burghley, however, took a more favourable view of Borough's conduct, and prevented the charge being pushed, till, amid the excitement of the next year, when Borough served creditably enough, it was allowed to drop.

On leaving Sagres Drake ranged along the coast, capturing many store-ships and creating a perfect panic. Then he anchored off the mouth of the Tagus, in Cascaes Bay, half hoping that the Marquis of Santa Cruz, who had there a great force of ships and galleys, would come out and attack him. The ships of Santa Cruz, however, were not ready for service; they had neither men, nor guns, nor stores; and it was impossible to get them in time. On the other hand, the forts, the galleys, the stream, the wind, and the sickly state of his own companies, prevented Drake from going in; and after waiting to assure himself that Santa Cruz would not come out, he decided to stretch away to the Azores and try to intercept some of the

homeward-bound ships. His squadron was dispersed in a gale, but he, with his own ship, fell in with a large East Indiaman, which he captured and took to England in June. Her value was officially returned at about £100,000.

Drake was desirous of refitting, recruiting his crews, which were sadly reduced by sickness, and returning at once to the coast of Spain to finish his work. Of this, however, neither the queen nor Burghley approved. They were anxious not to exasperate Philip beyond endurance, and neither of them seems to have understood that if his shipping was destroyed and his arsenals were burnt, it did not in the least matter whether he was exasperated or not. The power of Spain appeared to them so terrible that they could not realize its absolute weakness against such an attack as Drake's. So the months wore away, and in December Lord Howard was appointed to the chief command of the whole navy of England. Drake was sent to command at Plymouth, where in May he was joined by Howard and the greater part of the fleet; and there they were condemned to wait while the Spanish king and the Spanish government in their own leisurely way fitted out their Armada, appointed the Duke of Medina Sidonia to command it, and sent it to sea when it was reported ready.

Between Drake and Howard there was some distant connection by marriage, but it is doubtful if they had been personally acquainted before Howard took the chief command on himself. Howard was a few years the senior, had high social rank and courtly manners. Drake had a larger experience of the sea and a belief in himself which might easily be infectious. From the first he had main-

tained that the proper defence against the Armada was to prevent its coming. If the Spanish ships were burnt in the Spanish ports there would be no Spanish Armada in the Channel. And that the English fleet or detachments of the English fleet could effect this he had no doubt whatever. In the Tagus or the Groyne he would, had he been permitted, have lighted up such a bonfire as would have at once put an end to such aggression on the part of Spain. That this was a conception of Drake's is certain. We have it, under Howard's own hand, that he had at first thought otherwise ; but, he added, "I did and will yield ever unto them of greater experience."

"The opinion of Sir Francis Drake," he wrote, "Mr. Hawkyns, Mr. Frobiser, and others that be men of greatest judgment and experience (Thomas Fenner is named in other letters), as also my own, concurring with them in the same, is that the surest way to meet with the Spanish fleet is upon their own coast or in any harbour of their own, and there to defeat them."

That Hawkyns, Frobiser, and Fenner, all three capable seamen, agreed with Drake could not but impress Howard, but there can be little doubt that they themselves were impressed by Drake. We know that Drake had put forward the opinion more than a year before, and had acted on it when Fenner was serving under him, and Hawkyns and Frobiser were safe at home. Hawkyns, a bold and crafty seaman, had seen but little of war, and had not been afloat for nearly twenty years—since his escape from San Juan de Lua. Frobiser's experience was as a navigator rather than a warrior, though he was supposed—perhaps unjustly—to be not altogether guiltless of piracy. But

they at once accepted Drake's opinion ; they made it their own ; and their united voice impressed it on Howard. But even with Howard's agreement, they could not impress it on the queen, and the result was that the Armada, instead of being destroyed at Lisbon or Corunna, where failure would have been permitted a second attempt, had to be defeated, less decisively, in the Channel, and off Gravelines, where failure would have entailed disaster, and was beaten to pieces, also less decisively, on the western coast of Ireland.

It is unnecessary here to speak of the watch that was kept from Plymouth, or of how, when the Armada appeared, the fleet warped out of the Sound, and fought with it on the 21st July. The same afternoon Drake, by Howard's desire, wrote to warn Lord Henry Seymour and the squadron in the Downs of the enemy's approach.

"There hath passed," he said, "some cannon shot between some of our fleet and some of them, and as far as we perceive they are determined to sell their lives with blows. Whereupon his Lordship, the Lord Admiral, hath commanded me to write unto your Lordship and Sir William Wynter, that those ships serving under your charge should be put into the best and strongest manner you may, and ready to assist his Lordship for the better of encountering of them in those parts where you now are . . . The fleet of Spaniards is somewhat above a hundred sails, many great ships ; but truly I think not half of them men of war."

That night Drake was appointed to set the watch—to hang on to the Spaniards, and, by his poop lantern, show his position to the ships astern. But about midnight, he saw some ships steering to the south-west—the wind

seems to have been about north-west—and judged it possible that they might be Spaniards doubling back with the intention of making an assault on Plymouth. How many of them there were, he did not know, so at once resolved to go and see; and, in order not to draw the whole fleet after him on what might be a false trail, he put out his lights and followed alone. The ships seen proved to be German merchantmen making their way down Channel, and Drake returned to the fleet, meeting on his way the *capitana*, or flagship of the Andalusian squadron, which had been disabled, had dropped astern, and had been shamefully deserted by Medina Sidonia. Her commander wished to make terms, saying that he was Don Pedro de Valdes, and it behoved him not to surrender except on honourable conditions. The Englishman answered that he was Francis Drake and had no time to parley; Don Pedro must surrender at once or fight. So Don Pedro came at once and surrendered, esteeming it an honour to fall into the hands of Drake, "whose valour and felicity were so great that Mars and Neptune seemed to attend him in his attempts."

But meantime Drake's escapade had caused confusion and danger. Wanting his guiding light, the fleet had scattered, and when morning dawned, Howard, who had mistaken a Spanish light for Drake's, was, with only three ships, close to the enemy, while the rest of the fleet was hull down or out of sight astern. A more capable admiral than Medina Sidonia might have inflicted a heavy blow on the English, by the capture of the lord admiral; and though no harm had been done, the sense of risk was sufficiently strong to cause Drake's conduct to be strongly

criticized, even on the supposition that his story was true. But there wanted not men in the fleet to say that it was not true; that he had turned aside to plunder the merchantmen, or to capture the Andalusian *capitana;* and that thus to disobey his orders and endanger the fleet in pursuit of his private advantage, was a base thing to do. As to which, in fact, there was afterwards a very angry quarrel between Drake and Frobiser, who publicly spoke of Drake as a "cowardly knave or traitor," and said—

"After he had seen the *capitana* in the evening, that she had lost her masts, then, like a coward, he kept by her all night, because he would have the spoil. He thinks to cozen us of our share of fifteen thousand ducats; but we will have our shares, or I will make him spend the best blood in his body. He has had enough of those cozening cheats already."

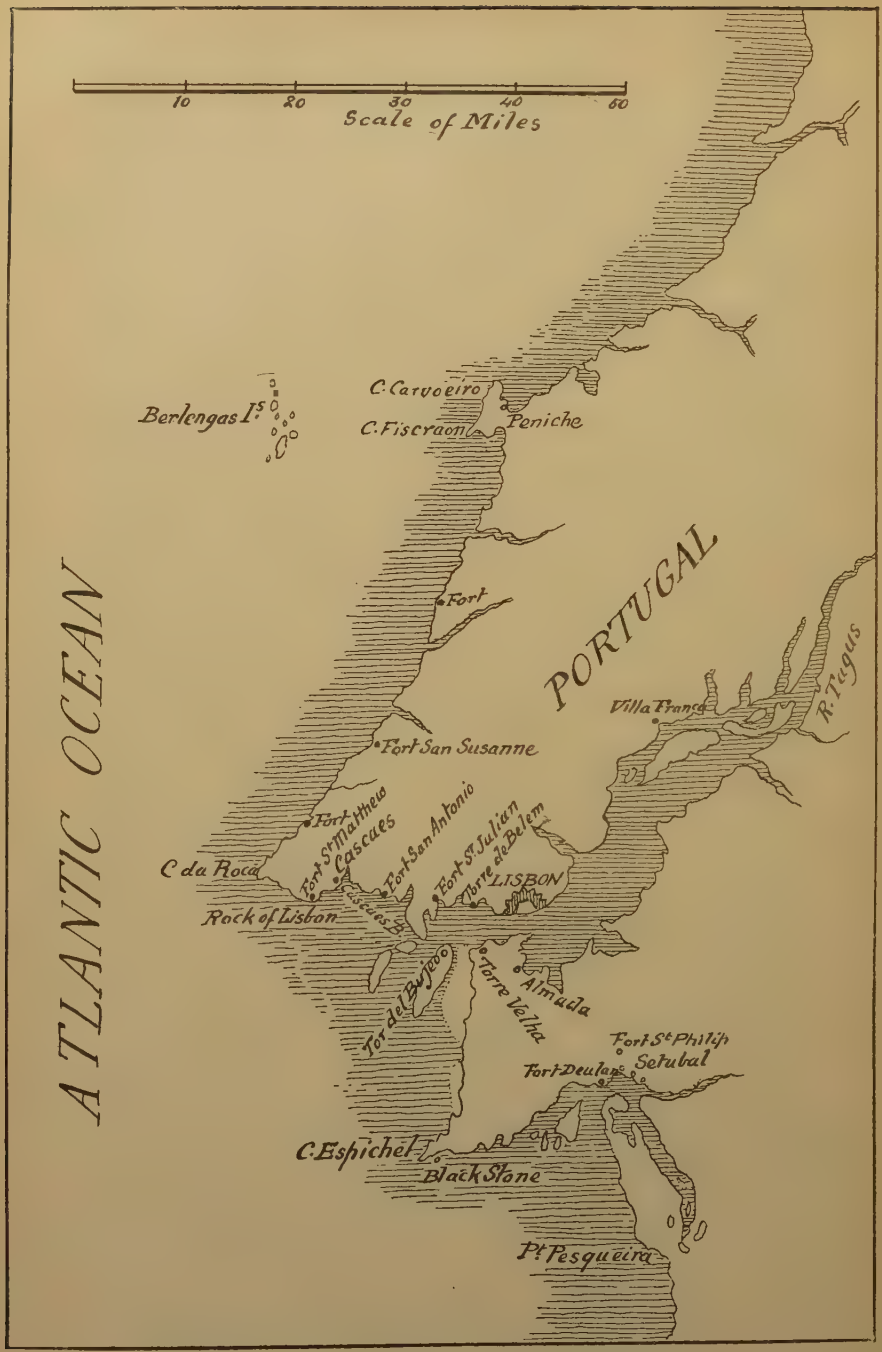
The quarrel threatened to end in more than angry words; but Lord Sheffield, in the first place, and afterwards Howard, were able to smooth it over, taking care, it would appear, to keep the two angry men apart.

But before this, battles had been fought and won. The heavy lumbering ships of the Spaniards had been followed up the Channel, attacked whenever opportunity offered, and had lost heavily in ships, in men, and in spirit. It needed little to scare them from Calais roads in bewildered panic; and the battle off Gravelines on the 29th July was decisive. They fled to their doom in the seas of the wild north and the still wilder west. England had been saved, and by the fleet; and of all the men who had bravely and skilfully fought, none received a larger meed of popular applause than Drake; so that to many, even at the present

day, it seems that Drake was, in fact, the commander-in-chief; Howard, so only in name; an idea which could only be confirmed by much stronger evidence than exists.

Drake, however, was appointed to command the naval part of the expedition which it was determined should repay Spain in her own coin. It has been suggested that this was a snub to Howard, who would fain have commanded it himself. For this there is no authority. There is no trace of any jealousy or rivalry between the two men. According to the standard of the day, Howard's rank put him beyond it. But the idea of this expedition had been formulated by Drake and Norreys jointly, and Howard was not the man to seek to overshadow the fair claims of his brothers in arms. It would perhaps have been better for the country if, in this instance, he had been less punctilious or more energetic. It is a now familiar maxim that one commander is better than two, and *à fortiori*, than three; and with Howard to control the diverse opinions of Drake, Norreys and Dom Antonio—the pretender to the throne of Portugal, in whose interests the expedition was nominally set forth—the result might have been very different from what it was.

The objects in view were: First, to "distress the ships of war in Guipuzcoa, Biscay, and Galicia, so that they may neither hinder the attack on the King of Spain's dominions, nor be able to make a counter-attack on England during the absence of the fleet." This might perhaps have been judiciously omitted. The Spanish ships had been very effectually "distressed" in the previous year, and were not in the least likely to offer any opposition. Second, if possible, to seize Lisbon and establish the



LISBON.

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government of Dom Antonio; and third, to pass on to the Azores, and seize one of the islands, "thereby to interrupt the convoys of treasure that do yearly pass that way to and from the East and West Indies." These objects were clearly desirable in themselves, and might have been attained if the force had been adequate, and if there had been one commander-in-chief. With three generals, and an army that during two months' delay at Plymouth, had dwindled by sickness, desertion, and false musters, from 16,000 or 18,000 to about 9000 men, the expedition was foredoomed to failure.

As it sailed from Plymouth on the 18th April, it consisted of six of the queen's ships and more than a hundred merchant ships as transports, with about 12,000 men all told, mariners and soldiers. The first descent was made on Corunna, which was attacked on the 24th. All the shipping was burnt and the lower town taken and plundered, a vast quantity of stores being destroyed. But the upper town held out, and though the English routed a relieving force which had been sent, it was decided not to waste more time, the weather being favourable for sailing, and the troops were re-embarked on the 10th May. An alarming sickness had broken out and was rapidly thinning their ranks; but in spite of this, and in face of bad weather and heavy surf, the troops were thrown on shore on the 19th at Peniche, whence they marched on Lisbon.

To this measure Drake was strongly opposed. He urged the advisability of landing the troops in Cascaes Bay, at the very entrance of the Tagus; reducing the castle and forts that guarded the passage, and so bringing the ships off Lisbon, whilst the troops, by an easy march,

invested it on the land side. To the combined attack, he believed the city would at once fall. Its defences, in fact, all faced the land; towards the water it was open. Dom Antonio, however, insisted that all Portugal would rise in his favour; Norreys accepted his statement; and the soldiers were eager to win distinction on shore. Drake was outvoted and had to yield; and whilst the soldiers, sickly and in no condition for marching over heavy roads and in a burning climate, were struggling through the fifty miles that separated them from Lisbon, he with the fleet went into Cascaes Bay, and seized the castle and a large number of merchant vessels. He might still, he thought, if the wind came fair, force the passage up the river and join hands with Norreys. But before his opportunity came, news reached him that the attack on the city had failed, and that the troops were marching down to Cascaes, where they were re-embarked without having sustained any serious loss from fighting, but with many dead, and a very large number disabled through sickness.

Bad weather set in; they were seventeen days getting to Vigo, where they had hoped to obtain supplies; but the place was cleared out; the men were dying fast from sickness and want of proper provisions; and a muster of effective men showed only two thousand. Drake filled up the complement of the best ships and started for the Azores; Norreys and the rest turned towards England. A violent storm was almost immediately encountered, the squadrons were scattered, and Drake, with the queen's ships, which alone kept together, made the best of his way to Plymouth, where he arrived towards the end of June. A considerable amount of booty was brought home, and the destruction of shipping and stores put an end, for the

time, to all idea on the part of Spain of renewing the attempt of invasion ; but, on the other hand, the loss of life, in spite of all efforts to conceal the facts, was, beyond doubt, enormous.

For some years after this Drake was on shore, attending to the water supply and municipal affairs of Plymouth, which, in 1593, he represented in parliament. Towards the end of 1594 he was called upon by the queen to take command of an expedition to the West Indies, with his old friend Sir John Hawkyns as vice-admiral. From the commencement it was a badly-managed affair. Though ordered in November 1594, it was not ready to sail until August 1595, when its strength and probable destination were well known to the Spaniards, who made every possible preparation to meet it. The fleet, consisting of twenty-seven ships, finally sailed on the 28th August, but did not reach the Grand Canary for a month.

There they found that Las Palmas had been fortified, and that it was impossible to take it by assault. Drake would not stay to reduce it by more deliberate measures, and having watered at one of the other islands steered for Guadeloupe, which was reached on the 29th October. By this time preparations to meet them had been everywhere completed; treasure had been removed; and new batteries had been erected. An attempt was made on Porto Rico, but Hawkyns died the day they arrived off it ; the officer in command of the troops was killed on the same day, and after several encounters, it was found too strong for the force. Other places were visited, but those that could not be strongly held had been deserted. Drake himself was suffering from dysentery ; but the old spirit of enterprise prompted him to land and attempt to march

across the isthmus to Panama. The Spaniards, however, were now ready. They had blocked the roads by numerous forts, which it was found impossible to reduce or to evade, and, worn out by sickness and disappointment, Drake returned to his ship. He died, and was buried at sea off Porto Bello, on the 28th January, 1596.

In English history Drake holds the peculiar position of being the first to win distinction and fame purely as a seaman. To compare him with his late successors is impossible; the circumstances of his career were so entirely different. As a commander, indeed, we recognize in him all the conditions of greatness—the energy, the caution in preparing, the promptness in acting; the unswerving courage, the fearlessness of responsibility; "a man of masterful temper, careful of the lives and interests of his subordinates, but permitting no assumption of equality; impatient of advice, intolerant of opposition, self-possessed and self-sufficing." His voyage round the world may be taken as the epitome of his career. The conception and the carrying it through in the face of all difficulties and dangers mark the genius, the courage, the prudence and the self-reliance which distinguished him in higher command. But he was essentially the man of his time; the embodiment of the maritime genius of the Elizabethan age; the founder of the system on which his successors built; the tracer of lines which they developed. He it was who taught English sailors that the proper way to fight their enemies was not to wait to be attacked, but to search them out on their own coasts; a lesson that has borne good fruit ever since, and remains as true to-day as it was three hundred years ago.

BLAKE

BLAKE.

III

ROBERT BLAKE

BLAKE'S remarkable career as a naval officer began at the age of fifty, and lasted eight years. His previous experiences were those of an Oxford scholar, a Bridgwater merchant, a puritan politician, and a colonel in the army of the commonwealth. Each of these in succession contributed to make the man. It is not our business to criticize either his politics or his religion, but it is right to inquire how he became what he was.

Sprung from a typical English stock, long settled in Bridgwater and in the neighbourhood, commercial, prosperous, well-connected, and locally honoured, his father might have been expected to bring up the eldest of his large family to his own business; but he sent him to Oxford at sixteen, and kept him there nearly ten years (1616-1625). For six or seven years of this time he was one of the early members of the newly-founded Somersetshire college, Wadham, from which college he took his degree of Bachelor of Arts. Here he was in an easy position, pursuing classical studies in the hope—certainly at first, and perhaps afterwards—of some day obtaining a fellowship. Happily he failed. His father's last illness

called him away to take his place as the head of the family.

What was Robert Blake learning and witnessing at Oxford? To put it shortly though not perhaps a student in the full sense of the word, he was making classical literature more or less a part of himself; for it was the main course of study pursued at the university. One of the most probable of the legends which have gathered round his great name, is that he was in the habit during his after life of quoting the Latin poets to illustrate passing events. His mind was necessarily familiar with the fine examples of Greek and Roman public spirit, to say nothing of classical republicanism. At any rate his career exhibited in great perfection the traces of the stubborn old Roman character. Still more closely clung to him the ingrained puritanism which he probably brought with him from home. These last years of James I deeply scored the university record. It was the battle-ground between the opposing ecclesiastical factions, headed respectively by Laud and Abbot, of which the latter was gradually losing ground. Blake would feel the bitterness of the situation: he would watch with dismay the king's treatment of parliaments, and the efforts of the Court to secure a foothold in the university. His own college had suffered in this way, but after a struggle had successfully resisted the king's illegal action. To note a small circumstance, what must he have felt some years later, when the gift he had made to his college, the "Blake Salt," was passed over to the Royal Mint at Oxford, with the rest of the college plate, to be coined into money for King Charles?

The prosperity of Blake's father had become clouded,

and he died in debt. This debt Robert managed, when he entered upon the second stage of his career, to pay off, as well as to educate and settle his numerous brothers. Perhaps we may find in these circumstances the reason why he never married. In this business he learnt the habits which stood him in good stead when the reorganization of the navy fell so largely to his share. Here also he was gaining by experience the habit of acting on his own responsibility in connection with nautical affairs. We have no proof that he sailed on his own trading ventures, or on board his own ships; but it was very much the custom of the day. There is good reason to believe that he spent some years at Schiedam in Holland, probably during this period. When at home he was an interested witness of the forcible measures taken in ecclesiastical matters by the predominant authorities of those parts.

Blake was elected to parliament for Bridgwater in 1640, as an opponent of the Court. His education and his honourable character made it a natural selection; but the "Short Parliament" was almost immediately dissolved, nor was the influence of his friends sufficient to counteract that of the royalist gentry, who, when the "Long Parliament" was shortly afterwards summoned, placed a member of their own body in the seat which he had occupied. His brief experience had brought him into contact with the leaders of the Great Rebellion; but we have no reason to think that any one as yet detected the military talents which lay hid in the scholar, the merchant, and the citizen. He had already attained middle age; no gifts of speech had carried him to the front. Nothing, apparently, but the Civil War could have brought to light the abilities of the

man who was to be one of the chief naval heroes whom England has ever produced.

As soon as it became evident that the contest between King and Parliament must be decided by arms, Blake seems to have been intimately concerned with raising troops to resist the royal forces. Disregarding, but not denying, the unauthenticated accounts of his first essays in war, we find him serving under Sir John Horner of Mells, against the royalist Marquis of Hertford, who was driven out of Wells in 1642; and then as lieutenant-colonel of Alexander Popham's fine west-country regiment. Here he showed his resolute spirit in the defence of Bristol, and was afterwards detached to Dorsetshire, where he first became famous by his defence of Lyme Regis in 1644. This was a mere fishing village, which Blake set to work to fortify against the imminent attack of the royalists. The place was essentially weak by its situation, and the defences, hastily thrown up, were of the feeblest kind, wholly unfit to resist an army of 6000 men, with a regular siege-train, commanded by Prince Maurice. Nevertheless, the desperate courage which Blake infused into his little garrison, his fertility of resource, his utter indifference to the odds brought against him, and his excellent intelligence as to the enemy's proceedings, enabled him to resist, with complete success, the perpetual onslaughts and bombardments of a gallant enemy, ending with a storm of red-hot shot. After a magnificent defence of some three months Lord Warwick's fleet and Maurice's necessities put an end to the siege. This was itself a fine performance, but the defence of Taunton, in 1645, was not less desperate, and made far more noise in the world.

Into this place Blake threw himself at the critical moment when the Earl of Essex had blundered almost fatally in his western campaign, and here he restored the fortunes of the parliamentary party. Taunton, like Lyme, was unfortified and unarmed; but its situation gave it an importance which justified all risks, and its inhabitants shrank from no sacrifice which the Somersetshire colonel called upon his neighbours to make. Every effort was employed to dislodge him. Desperate street-fighting continually issued in the defeat of the storming-parties; starvation was at one time imminent; fresh commanders, fresh bodies of besiegers, succeeded no better than their predecessors: in fact, there were no less than three sieges before relief finally arrived. The town was by that time in a ruined state. Lord Clarendon himself admits that the defence of Taunton had occupied a body of 4000 foot and 5000 horse for nearly all the summer of 1645. It had broken up the royalist superiority in the west of England, and, next to the decisive battles of Marston Moor and Naseby, perhaps contributed more than anything else to the king's discomfiture.

Between 1645 and 1649 we hear very little of our hero, till, in fact, after the king's execution. He was again elected for Bridgwater in 1645, but, as governor of Taunton, devoted himself for some months to the restoration of the shattered town. His forces were disbanded, and the Self-denying Ordinance relieved him from his command. Much speculation has arisen out of this temporary obscurity. He was thought to have incurred Cromwell's jealousy; and was said to have objected to the cruelty with which the king was treated; but when he

took his seat in parliament in 1646, we find Ludlow asserting that Blake shared his own republican sentiments, and he certainly omitted to take any steps to save the life of the king. His name is not indeed to be found on the list of the regicides, but he accepted his great post of "general-at-sea" within a few days of the king's execution. We may fairly account for his temporary obscurity by observing that he had never been one of Cromwell's comrades during the war, and that he was therefore not likely to be preferred to those who had fought by the side of the conqueror. Nor was Blake the man to push himself to the front. No doubt also he presented himself rather as a man of action than a statesman. In the straightforward, indomitable, republican patriot, Cromwell's keen eye detected the man required to reorganize the navy, the man who, considering State affairs not to be its province, would "prevent foreigners from fooling us." That famous expression, whether originally Blake's or not, exactly represented his conduct of sea affairs ; and under the commonwealth, with a fleet which had not yet forgotten the Stuarts, this principle alone could save the State.

On the 12th February 1649, foreign affairs having assumed a threatening aspect, Colonel Edward Popham (under whose brother Blake had served), Colonel Blake, and Colonel Deane were appointed "generals-at-sea." Popham had served as a naval officer, Deane began life as a sailor, Blake at any rate knew something about sea affairs, probably a good deal. His brief career as an English naval officer divides itself into his operations against Prince Rupert and in the British Channel, the Dutch war, and the Spanish war. The title of "general" had been very commonly given to

the chief admiral of a fleet; but the new title seems to have been deliberately selected in order that it might convey to the sea-officers and men the idea that they were about to be governed by the most distinguished of the land-officers who had brought the Civil War to a conclusion. In the previous year Admiral Batten had led some of them over to the side of the royalists, and when Colonel Rainborow [1] had been sent to take command, a serious mutiny had broken out. Men of a different stamp were now to command, but still generals, generals-at-sea. Some members of the council of state, with the able administrator Vane at their head, formed the navy committee.

To Blake was assigned the duty of dealing with Prince Rupert, whose squadron supplied a nucleus for banished royalists, and seized what they required from the "rebels," very much after the fashion of pirates. After blockading Rupert's ships at Kinsale for some months, the general was driven off by a November gale, and his enemy escaped to Portugal. Cromwell now offered him the post of major-general under himself, for the conquest of Ireland, just then taken in hand; but Blake elected to finish his task of hunting out Prince Rupert. It seems as if he had found on board ship the sort of men he liked. From March to May 1650, he watched the mouth of the Tagus; and we now have the advantage of following his proceedings in the State Papers. His orders were judiciously wide. Everything was left to his judgment, and every attention paid to his suggestions for the "honour and interest of the

[1] Rainborow, however, had been brought up to the sea, as his father and grandfather before him. Like Popham, like Deane, like Lawson, and no doubt many others, he became a soldier at the outbreak of the Civil War.

commonwealth." His letters show that he was far from being afraid of the responsibility thus thrown upon him, but that at the same time, he took exceeding care to justify every one of his proceedings.

Acting under his general orders, Blake resolved to take strong measures both with Portugal and France. The refusal of King John to expel Prince Rupert from the Lisbon waters was at once dealt with by stopping the Lisbon trade. Rupert had to depart. After sundry adventurous passages he once more escaped from Blake's blockade, and sought a new asylum in the south-eastern ports of Spain. Thither the general followed him, and drove some of his ships on shore, but not those of the two princes, who were at the moment cruising upon the trade, and who now took refuge in Toulon. Blake, finding his remonstrances unheeded, adopted the same treatment of the French which he had found successful with the Portuguese, on which the princes, finding themselves unwelcome, made off to the West Indies. There Maurice was lost at sea, and Rupert was reduced to the one ship which he commanded, and which finally carried him to France. After that he had to keep quiet till better times.

These services lasted two years, and were gratefully recognized by parliament. Blake was now entrusted with the task of subduing the last refuges of the royalists in the English Channel. His instructions were couched in the style common to himself and his masters—"You are to make use of that reputation which the good success from the hand of God has given you, to complete what remains." The success in this service was certainly not inferior to the last, while the national danger was greater.

The Scilly isles were not only holding out with vigour against the parliament, but their excellent situation for harassing the English trade had attracted the particular notice of the Dutch. Admiral Tromp had been sent with a squadron to reconnoitre; but war had not yet been decided upon, and Blake had no great difficulty in reducing and securing the islands.

The invasion of England by the young Charles in 1651, called Blake from the quarter-deck once more and for the last time. On the 19th August, parliament, in anxious haste, appointed him commander-in-chief of the army in the four counties of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, and Dorset. This was the district in which his former services had made him known; but three days later the order was cancelled, on account of the death of Popham and Deane's absence from the fleet on military service. Blake was to repair to the Downs, to hoist his flag on board the Victory, to see that no supplies are sent from abroad to the "King of Scotland, who is now marching to the south," to keep the fleet in order, and "to prevent any impressions that may be made on the seamen by misrepresentation of affairs." The position he now held as the indispensable officer to be employed on emergencies by land or sea, marks him as standing close to Cromwell in the estimation of parliament. This was soon after emphasized by his appointment, jointly with Lambert, to the Wardenship of the Cinque Ports, and still more, by his being made sole general-at-sea for the next nine months.

The capture of Jersey was his last task before the great Dutch war. Sir George Carteret held it for the king, and made a gallant defence; but, as at Scilly, Blake brought his

ships close up against the forts in a manner till then almost unknown, and, in spite of the rock-bound coast, suffered but little in the process. In these minor engagements he learnt to estimate the military importance of forts and their guns, as then provided and armed, at their true value in relation to ships, and was soon about to illustrate his experience.

Parliament towards the end of the year elected their general-at-sea to a place in the council of state. On that board he was necessarily conversant with every detail of naval administration, and in a position of equality with the able men who had hitherto worked for the reform of the service. The treatment of seamen, though already improved, still required much reform, and Blake largely contributed to its further improvement. The care bestowed on the superior war-ships, which had been built out of the proceeds of Charles I's ill-fated ship-money, and upon the new ones already supplied by the commonwealth, had not been thrown away. It exercised an important influence on the Dutch war. As a councillor, he had the advantage seldom possessed by a sea-officer, of becoming acquainted with the true aspect of foreign affairs, as far as they presented themselves to the government through its various channels of information. Confidential relations between Blake and the council, and especially with Cromwell, who was at the head of it, were not established a day too soon, for the most critical war in which England had ever yet been engaged was on the point of breaking out.

The Navigation Act of 1651, which put a stop to the great Dutch carrying-trade, was the proximate cause of the war; but nothing could have prevented it. At that date

there could be no question of peaceful rivalry in commerce and colonization: numberless hostile encroachments and studied insults could only end one way; and the Dutch were already engaged in fitting out a fleet of men-of-war. On two main points the English resolved to insist, the Dutch to offer a stubborn resistance. These were (1) the ancient claim of the English to the sovereignty of the Narrow Seas—always submitted to by other nations, even in the ignominious reigns of James and Charles—and by no means the mere ceremony of an arrogant people; and (2) the right to the fishing grounds on British coasts. The "honour of the flag" came first into dispute. Cromwell, though he himself disapproved of the war, was sent by the council on the 16th March to confer with Blake in the Downs; and the course to be pursued in the matter was arranged between them. Blank commissions for a vice and rear-admiral were placed in Blake's hands, but before he could fill them up, the war had begun. His fleet was by no means sufficiently numerous for the work which lay before it, but was rapidly increased as the struggle developed. The Dutch were first in the field, but both commanders had had their orders. Four days before Tromp opened the war, a Dutch ship off Start Point was forced to salute the flag; and on the 18th May, Blake, whose flag was flying in the James, of 60 guns, had resolved, whatever might be the odds against him, to make the refusal of the salute a *casus belli*. He had indeed only fifteen ships in his own division, with which he was cruising in the Straits of Dover, while Major Bourne, his rear-admiral, was anchored in the Downs with eight more. Tromp suddenly appeared off Dover Castle at the head of forty-two ships, and not only, as the English

believed, deliberately insulted it, but did not lower his flag. Soon after this, Blake, who had been at anchor off Rye, hove in sight, when Tromp stood out to sea ; but on picking up a vessel which reported what had taken place off the Start, bore right up for Blake's squadron, a proceeding which the general considered to show "a resolution to engage." Blake now "singled himself from the rest of the fleet," as a contemporary writer states, and neared the Dutch admiral with a view to demand the salute of the English flag without effusion of blood. For that purpose he fired three single guns in succession, to which Tromp, far from lowering his flag, replied with a broadside. Each, indeed, accused the other of firing the first broadside ; but Tromp had been given to understand that he was not to lower his flag unless he should be the weaker party ; and his force was much the stronger ; so the dispute is of no consequence. The Dutch opened the war.

The battle then commenced with fury, but Blake was so far ahead of his own ships that he had to sustain the fight alone for a considerable time with all the Dutch ships that could get near him. As his squadron came up he was gradually relieved, but the James was severely handled, and lost many men. Bourne, however, made all possible haste, and getting up before nightfall, attacked the Dutch rear. Tromp thought it best to make off in the darkness, nor did he resume the combat next day. He professed to consider the battle a surprise, and desired fresh orders. In this first and quite unequal combat, two Dutch ships were taken, but no English—not even the James, which must have been effectively handled during the four hours' single fight "against the main body of the enemy's fleet."

Such was the issue, as Blake says, of the Dutch "watching an advantage to brave us upon our own coasts." The council and parliament cordially approved of his proceedings, promised to attend to all his wants, and authorized him to engage and destroy Tromp's fleet.

On the 8th June, 1652, the general reported to the council the "willingness and unanimity" of the officers of the fleet; to which the council replied with an effusiveness which was none the less sincere for being couched in the usual puritanical phrases. Convinced of the justice of their cause, these grim warriors appealed to Heaven. In view of the struggle which was now inevitable, "Blake, with his officers and seamen, kept several days of humiliation in the fleet." He had shown that it would not be his fault if their sincerity were not tested at the cannon's mouth. He was renowned for the discipline which he introduced into the navy, but like Cromwell's management of his invincible "Ironsides," it was a sympathetic discipline.

The government now determined to employ the fleet in the capture of Dutch merchant ships, and in enforcing the established tax of the tenth fish on the Scottish fishing-grounds. This tax had been commuted for the annual payment of £30,000, which the Dutch had latterly refused to pay. Several rich prizes were sent into English ports, to the great joy of the people, and Blake himself sailed to the north in the Resolution, of 68 guns, with the main part of his fleet, in order to deal with the 600 herring-busses and their convoy, and to waylay the Dutch India ships coming round the coast of Scotland. Sir George Ayscue, his rear-admiral, was left to guard the Straits

of Dover. Eleven out of the twelve ships which formed the convoy were captured or sunk by Blake's advanced squadron; but the remarkable thing was that Blake allowed the whole of those busses which he succeeded in catching, after being unloaded of their fish, to go free with their crews. For this he had good reasons; but his conduct was much remarked upon as a case of misplaced generosity. Even so it was characteristic. The Blake legends supply many such instances. He had no quarrel with the poor.

Tromp, in spite of the political divisions which hampered his movements, had collected a fine fleet in the Texel long before it was expected, but the winds and waves favoured the English. He failed both in overpowering Ayscue's small squadron, and in meeting Blake off the Orkneys; but he succeeded in alarming the English coast. Cromwell himself went down to erect batteries in the neighbourhood of Deal; and every preparation was made to resist a landing. But westerly winds and calms put a stop to that part of Tromp's plans; and, taking up the merchant fleet which was waiting for outward convoy, he made sail with all speed to the north in order to protect the Dutch homeward-bound trade, and to match himself against Blake in those seas. His force seems to have been superior; but it was the fault of neither chief that they did not join battle. Just as they were about to begin, a storm broke upon them with quite unusual severity, and instantly scattered both fleets. That of Tromp suffered by far the most, and he lost some ships; while Blake found shelter behind the Mainland of Shetland. Both brought their fleets home. The Dutch were furious. They attributed Tromp's mis-

fortunes to his error in losing time in the Channel instead of going straight to the defence of the fishing-fleet.

The insults heaped on the great chief culminated in suspension from his command. De Ruyter, a younger officer whose reputation, already high, was to eclipse that of Tromp, hoisted his flag, though with some reluctance; but De With took the chief command. This turned out to be a great mistake; for political quarrels ran so high that the crew of Tromp's late flagship, the Brederode, actually refused to allow the new commander-in-chief, the unpopular rival of their favourite admiral, to come on board. Before, however, Ayscue, who had been sent westward, could join Blake, De Ruyter, with great promptitude, contrived to cut him off, and a battle ensued—a drawn battle. Ayscue made (the 16th August) a good fight of it, and, according to English accounts, had a distinct advantage. He ran into Plymouth to refit, and some of his ships joining Blake, took part in the battle which followed.

Before it was fought the general fell in with a French squadron which was on its way to relieve Dunkirk, then being besieged and hard pressed by the Spaniards. There was no regular war on the part of England with either nation; but the French were at the moment under the grave displeasure of the commonwealth for certain commercial offences, and still more for the active sympathy they had shown towards the banished royalists. The English government, treating it as a question of reprisals, ordered Blake to attack this squadron, which he did with success, and Dunkirk was in consequence obliged to surrender for want of supplies; but France was not in a condition to declare war. And yet it was not France that

Cromwell finally determined to attack, but Spain. Both courted him and trembled.

The great battles were now to come. The English were this time much better prepared than their enemy, whose fleet had been sent out in haste, in inferior numbers, the ships insufficiently manned, and the morale of the crews enfeebled by political divisions; but the Dutch populace were enraged at the loss of their fish, and would hear of no delay. Their commanders did their best to compensate for these defects by drawing up their ships on the flank of the great shoal known as the Kentish Knock, not far from the North Foreland, but this did them no good. On the 28th September Blake attacked, being determined to run any risk rather than fail to engage; and, in his efforts to keep the wind, his own Resolution, the James, and other ships "had three or four rubs upon the Kentish Knock," but were not damaged. Obeying his positive orders, they reserved their fire till they came to close quarters. Thus they did great execution on the enemy without much loss to themselves. "Three of the Dutch ships," says Blake, "were wholly disabled at the first brunt, having lost all their masts." The Royal Sovereign, no longer called "Royal," was said to have sunk one of her opponents with a single broadside. Penn and Bourne, the vice and rear-admirals, performed their duty with the greatest courage and skill. The victory was complete. "The Dutch rear-admiral and two captains were prisoners." In the morning the enemy made off to Holland, with the loss of four, probably more, ships. "On the second day they were many less in number than the first." Their loss in killed is not known, but it was reported that they sent no less than 2000 wounded men

on shore. The English loss is put variously at from 40 to 300 killed, and 300 wounded, but statistical accuracy is not to be found on either side. De With excused his defeat on good grounds; but besides the deficiencies already mentioned, he accused several of his captains of the worst possible behaviour. Some were tried and found guilty. The real blame lay at the door of the bitter political divisions amongst the people and of the practical independence of the different States. Each of these had its own admiralty, and disgraceful conduct was the natural consequence.

This disaster only brought out the high spirit of the Dutch. They saw their errors and determined to rectify them as far as they could. The first step was to humble themselves to Tromp, put him once more at the head of the navy, and strain every nerve to meet the English on even terms. Tromp's views were consulted as to the appointment of officers, and in less than six weeks he was at sea with willing crews in eighty-five ships. The English Intelligence Department, as we should now call it, was non-existent; the Dutch were much better informed. The council of state believed that the late victory had decided the war, and ships were wanted elsewhere; so the victorious fleet was broken up into squadrons for this purpose. Blake was left with only forty-five ships, and some of these only partially manned, to guard the Channel; but it was not in any degree his fault. His applications for help and warnings of what might happen had not been attended to, and the instructions as to the apportionment of his fleet had been imperative and precise. The emergency arose suddenly, and he had now to act. Here was Tromp, after seeing his outward-bound convoy safe on their way,

challenging him to battle with about double his number of ships, while he was at anchor in the Downs, exposed to their attack. The council of war, which Blake (like the other parliamentary admirals) always summoned on such occasions, agreed with him that they ought to accept the challenge, and run any risk rather than let Tromp loose upon the coasts and shipping of England.

The decision must be judged, not only by the strict rules of strategy, but by the larger considerations which affected the condition of affairs. As to the inequality of forces, the mere superiority of numbers on the part of the Dutch was by no means the sole factor in the case. Blake had a few ships with him superior to those of the enemy, and in the two actions which had taken place he had not formed any great respect for the fighting qualities of the Dutch. The result showed that he had underrated his foe, but it is probable that the superiority in numbers would not have told as it did if the very captains who had voted for battle had not misbehaved. This was not then a foolhardy enterprise. Blake had a fair prospect of success; and, at the opening of the war, it was all-important to display an undaunted front, and even though taken by surprise, to make the best of it. The government at any rate showed after the battle that this was their opinion. Not a word of blame came from them.

On the 29th November the little English fleet sailed out from the Downs to engage their powerful enemy, but the struggle did not take place till the 30th November, off Dungeness. It centred as usual round the chief admirals on either side. Blake, in the Triumph, of 68 guns, had a desperate encounter with the flagships of De Ruyter

and Evertsen, but she was nobly supported by the Vanguard and Victory; though terribly mauled, they were not taken. These three ships were, in fact, engaged for a considerable time with twenty ships of the enemy at once. Tromp, on the other hand, in the Brederode, was attacked with equal fury by the Garland (also called the Rose and Crown), and the Bonaventure, but they being weak ships, and Admiral Evertsen having come to the aid of his chief, they were both taken, with the loss of their brave captains and a large proportion of their men. Three others were sunk, and the Hercules was picked up by a Dutch squadron on the following night. The Dutch had lost one ship, and otherwise suffered very severely; but Blake, uncertain of his own officers, thought it best to retreat to Dover, and thence to the Thames, "where they might have the river to friend if need should require." This was the celebrated occasion when Tromp, following a Dutch example after a victory in the Baltic, is said to have hoisted a broom at his masthead; against which legend there is a great deal to be said. At any rate, satisfied with his success, he stood over to the French shore and passed his convoy through the Channel.

The splendid valour shown by Blake and some of his officers absolved him, when the circumstances were understood, from all blame; but at first the prevailing feeling was one of alarm and anxiety lest the Dutch should land and insult the coasts. This soon passed away; but people little knew what agony of mind the retreat of the fleet had cost their favourite commander. The failure to beat a brave and determined enemy with half his number of ships affected his spirits to such an extent that he wrote, the day

after the battle, a most pathetic letter to the council of state. He insists on an examination into the "deportment of several commanders" in the late action, since "there was so much baseness of spirit, not amongst the merchant-men only [for on both sides the best merchant ships were armed, and ranked with the men-of-war], but many of the State ships." Next he desires an inquiry into the "discouragement and want of seamen," which he himself thinks chiefly due to the "great number of private men-of-war, especially out of Thames;" and, finally, he asks for his "discharge from this employment, so much too great for me," . . . "that so I may spend the remainder of my days in private retirement and in prayers to the Lord for a blessing upon you and the nation;" and again, "that so I may be freed from that trouble of spirit which lies upon me, arising from the sense of my own insufficiency and the usual effects thereof, reproach and contempt of men and disservice of the commonwealth." There is, however, a saving clause in this desponding letter, between the lines of which we cannot but read his distress at having been left with so weak a force; he earnestly begs for reinforcements "to fight them again." The letter, in short, had not been called forth by what could hardly under the circumstances be reckoned a defeat, but by the conduct of those on whom he had good cause to rely in this gallant venture, and by the serious mistake which had been made at headquarters.

Nothing could be finer than the behaviour of the council of state to their self-accusing general. They were conscious that the fault had been their own; but no recriminations are to be found on either side. They more than

acceded to all his requests, except the one on which he had laid such a touching emphasis—that he might be relieved from his command. They soothed his wounded feelings by the heartiest thanks for his "good deportment in that action, and his faithful service." The new commissioners of the admiralty sent commissioners to examine the accused captains; they ordered all the detached squadrons to rally round the general; they took infinite pains to redress the wrongs of the seamen; they sent 1200 land-soldiers for ship-service; and they recognized that their commander had too great a weight to bear on his own shoulders. Two officers of the highest distinction were sent from Scotland to share it, Monck and Deane; Blake, of course, stood first of these three generals-at-sea. The two new generals had no time to learn much about naval affairs, for the battles came on fast and furiously.

Tromp, in charge of the outward-bound trade, had swept the Channel; but the English had made up their minds to prevent him from convoying the homeward-bound ships back to Holland. Emulating the spirit of the Dutch, extraordinary efforts were made to fit out a fleet which should put an end to the war at once. In number of ships the Dutch were a little superior, but the greater size of some of the English redressed the balance. Blake and Deane were both on board the Triumph, with the gallant Lawson under them in the Speaker (of 62 guns); Penn and Monck each in command of separate squadrons. This was as yet the naval system—to fight in squadrons or divisions, under the red, white, and blue flags, the admiral of each in the centre, and the rest grouped round him ready to engage ship to ship. In the Admiralty Instruc-

tions of 1647 the admiral of the fleet was to leave it to the vice-admiral "to assail the enemy's admiral, and to match yourself as equally as you can to succour the rest of the fleet as cause shall require, not wasting your powder, nor shooting afar off, nor till you come side by side." The Dutch war taught many lessons. In the Instructions of 1655, issued by Blake, Monck, Disbrowe, and Penn, as "admirals and generals of the fleet;" "all the ships of every squadron shall endeavour to keep in a line with the chief."

The battle of Portland (the 18th February, 1653) was not only fought in squadrons, but the English squadrons happened to be separated—Monck's by an interval of four miles to leeward—when Tromp's fleet came in sight; and that great admiral was much too good an officer to lose the opportunity of taking them in detail. Bearing down with a westerly wind upon Blake, who was to windward of the rest, the red squadron had no choice but to stand the brunt of the attack as well as it could till the other squadrons could work up to its help. It is not easy to decide how far Blake was to blame in not obtaining better notice of the enemy's movements. A dense fog had prevailed on the 16th of the month, so that it must have been difficult to ensure an efficient look-out. It was thought best to stretch backwards and forwards between Portland and the Casquets in open order, so as to diminish the chances of missing the enemy, and to spread widely, with a view to cover the ground. The centre of the Channel was probably selected at head-quarters as the post of observation, and for reasons which we should understand better if we were living nearer the time. Further, the squadron commanded by Monck was not so likely as the rest to master the diffi-

culty of the situation, as he was totally inexperienced. All things considered, it may be more proper to express surprise that Penn was only a mile to leeward at the critical moment, and Monck only four, than to find fault with Blake.

The Triumph as usual was the centre round which the battle raged. Again she fought several ships at once; the Brederode, once more bearing Tromp's flag, being her chief opponent. Lawson pressed forward to her assistance; and he was soon followed by Penn, at the head of the blue squadron, which "stood through the whole Dutch fleet to support the generals." Somewhat later Monck and his white squadron came up with the rest, and the tide of victory set in for the English. Tromp, alarmed for his convoy, which was attacked by English frigates, was glad to draw off for the night. The Triumph still kept her flag flying, but she had been very severely damaged, and had lost one hundred men, besides many wounded. Amongst these was Blake himself, who sustained a severe laceration of the thigh, from which he never properly recovered; his flag-captain and secretary were killed by his side. Tromp and De Ruyter also suffered heavily, but they showed admirable skill in keeping their fleet together, and, when night came on, in getting to the support of their convoy. The next day the English pursued up Channel with the wind in their favour, their retreating enemy being formed into a crescent for the protection of their merchant ships, and the English breaking through from time to time with great effect. In the process they lost one ship, the Sampson, which was so much injured as to be sunk by her own captain, being no longer seaworthy; but the despatch signed by the three generals in Stokes Bay reports

that at the close of the second day they had taken seventeen or eighteen men-of-war. This, however, was an overestimate. On the third day the pursuit recommenced, and several more Dutch men-of-war and merchant ships were taken or destroyed—sixty, it is said, in all; but the skilful Dutch admirals contrived to save the large majority of their fleet and convoy, by tiding home in their shallow waters. In this their flatter bottoms assisted them, though that build had defects which gave the advantage at sea to the English.

Altogether it was a great, but not a final victory. Tromp was hampered by his convoy, and still more by want of powder for his guns; Blake suffered by the separation of his squadrons when the fight began. Tromp had to complain of some of his captains; Blake suffered no repetition of the former misconduct, but was nobly supported. He also experienced the usefulness of the trained soldiers who had been distributed through the fleet. The terrible nature of the battle finds frequent expression; ships taken and retaken, guns, muskets and cutlasses all in use at the same time at close quarters; the two great officers of the opposing fleets pitted against one another, and both countries, excited to the last degree of patriotic fervour, almost in sight of the combatants. But it required two more, and still more decisive, victories before the stubborn spirit of the Dutch was subdued. Blake, as they knew, was badly wounded; Monck was unknown at sea. Their own brilliant admirals, Tromp and De Ruyter, might recover all; and they hurried forth, with greater spirit than ever, a new fleet which should give their officers the opportunity.

Blake's wound had been neglected during the crisis of the three days' fight, and had to be carefully treated on

shore; but we find him attending to admiralty business on the 12th May. This was three weeks after Cromwell had put a violent end to the parliament, which led in a few months to his assumption of the title and office of Lord Protector. Monck and Deane sent in their adhesion to the new order of affairs: but Blake was not with the fleet, and his name does not appear. He is reported to have disapproved of Cromwell's proceedings, but it is clear that he had no idea of relinquishing the work which had fallen to his charge. He was the senior general-at-sea; the Dutch were mad at their defeats; and sure to fight to the last. His fleet was in excellent order. Three of the captains, of whom he complained after the battle of Dungeness, had been imprisoned in London and sentenced to pay a fine. Finally, he could depend on Monck, Deane, Penn, and Lawson for managing the instrument which he had made ready to their hands. As it happened the next victory was due more to them than to himself. The Dutch as usual had crossed over to the English shore before they were expected, and Blake's own squadron, which had charge of the North Sea, did not join Monck, who was cruising near the Straits of Dover at the head of the other squadrons, till that officer had fought the battle of the 2nd of June. This battle commenced near the North Foreland and ended off Nieuwpoort. Even without Blake the English had a decided advantage, since several of their ships were as usual larger than those of the Dutch, and they were slightly more numerous. The chief event of this first day's battle was the death of Deane, who was cut in two by a chain-shot as he stood by Monck's side. That fine officer had the presence of mind, which never forsook

him, to conceal the disaster by throwing his cloak over the body of his comrade.

There is a good deal of conflicting evidence concerning this battle. The wind was light and variable, and both Monck and Tromp manœuvred with much skill to keep their ships together and obtain the weather gage. A private letter of the time states that Monck fought at half cannon shot, and ordered his captains not to "board on equal terms," as he should send in frigates for that purpose. This he did whenever he "found some of them disordered and foul one against the other." Whether this is true or not, the Dutch, whose powder again ran short, fell towards the afternoon into confusion, and drew off for the night. But that night arrived Blake and his squadron of eighteen ships, having heard the firing at sea. On the next day the battle was renewed with spirit at 8 a.m., again with disastrous results to the Dutch. Blake's arrival turned the stubborn fight into a retreat, and only a shattered remnant of Tromp's fleet found their way into port. Blake and Monck wrote a joint despatch. Tromp himself had a remarkable escape. His men had boarded Penn's ship, but were repulsed by the crew, who, in their turn, boarded the Brederode with such success that Tromp, determined not to be taken alive, blew up the upper deck, and the boarders along with it. His ship was saved, and he himself, as by a miracle, survived untouched. It appears that the English had lost 362 men, killed and wounded; but they had taken eleven of the enemy's ships, of which one was a vice-admiral (of 1200 tons and fourteen guns in a tier), and two rear-admirals; they had sunk six ships; two had been blown up; and they

had taken 1350 prisoners. The victory was so complete that the Dutch ports were now effectually blockaded, and overtures for peace were sent to England,—but not accepted.

Blake remained in command of the fleet on the Dutch coast for some weeks after this splendid victory, and his despatches give a graphic description of the multitudinous wants of such a fleet after such a battle. He had some serious matters of complaint, *e.g.* that 700 soldiers who had been sent over to him "might have been serviceable unto us had care been taken to have sent bedding and clothes along with them." The supply of provisions, powder, and shot by no means kept pace with his necessities. He was also sorely distressed at the sickness of his ships' companies, and felt the more for them as he was exceedingly ill himself. At last he had to succumb to a complication of diseases, which were more or less the consequence of his wound, and were aggravated by want of rest and the press of business. More dead than alive, he was landed at Solebay, and, Monck having been appointed his successor, he retired to his own county. He was thus absent from the final battle of the 29th July. Blake's enforced relaxation in 1653 was the first that had fallen to his lot since he took up arms, and it was the last. He spent his time on his estate at Knoll, near Bridgwater, and his health gradually improved in his wholesome native air. We hear of his quiet, simple, religious habits. A favourite walk took the place of the quarter-deck or poop; and though he did not dislike company his disposition was taciturn and contemplative. By the end of the year he was much better, and entered upon the last and perhaps most remarkable part of his career.

It seems hardly credible that only a few weeks after their great defeat the old admirals, Tromp, De Ruyter, and De With should be in a position, with a fleet of some ninety ships, to challenge the victors once more. To find their coasts strictly blockaded was more than they could bear. Skilfully manœuvring so as to unite their squadrons from different ports, they were met by the whole English fleet under Monck, Penn, and Lawson. The victory of the English was still more pronounced than before, and of a still more sanguinary character. This may have been, partly at least, owing to Monck's order (reported by his chaplain and biographer) that his fleet should neither give nor take quarter ; but this order may indeed have only been intended to apply to his ships stopping to take possession of prizes. It was certainly not taken in the usual sense by many of Monck's officers and men, who saved several hundreds of their enemies from sinking ships. The noble old admiral Tromp was killed early in the battle by a musket-shot, but the battle was gallantly fought out till all hope had disappeared. The Dutch lost twenty-six ships and some 5000 men killed in battle, drowned and wounded, besides 1000 prisoners; the English about a tenth of the number of men, and only two ships. The Triumph, Blake's old ship, which he had so often led to glory, was saved in a manner becoming her reputation. She now bore the flag of Vice-Admiral Peacock, and was set on fire by the enemy's fireships. So hopeless did it seem to save her, that her crew had begun to desert the ship ; but Peacock refused to give her up, and succeeded in bringing her out of the battle. He was himself fatally burnt in the effort. For this gallant action each of the survivors received

a medal, specially struck for them. The victory was decisive, and it ended the war, though eight months were yet to elapse before Cromwell would treat for peace. This for various reasons he granted at last on comparatively easy terms. A good deal had happened since the battle of the Texel.

On the 6th August, parliament, at the instance of Cromwell and the council of state, ordered that Blake, Monck, Penn, and Lawson should each receive a large gold medal, and a valuable gold chain. Two of these medals are still to be seen—one at Windsor Castle, and the other at Wadham College. Both claim to be Blake's; one or the other is Monck's, for it is tolerably certain that neither of them belonged to Penn or Lawson. That of Penn is said to be still in possession of his descendants. Lawson's is lost. They are beautiful works of art, by the famous Simon. To each also was assigned a gold chain—to Blake and Monck chains of £300 value, to Penn and Lawson chains of £100 value. The difference of money-value at that date requires to be remembered in measuring the importance of these decorations. Medals, to the value of £1040 in all, were also voted for the inferior officers and men. Penn now became a general-at-sea, and Lawson vice-admiral. Active measures were taken to refit and increase the fleet, and to remedy deficiencies, which were very serious—for, owing to the splendid resistance of the Dutch, the English victories had been dearly bought. Blake, as autumn advanced, superintended these operations himself, both at the admiralty committee in London, and at Portsmouth, where Penn was under his command, and exceedingly useful. Together they distributed the "winter-guard," and

till the treaty was concluded, took care that the Dutch traders should find their way home by the northern route, and not through the English Channel.

France also was still scrupulously watched, for there were many unhealed wounds, and Cromwell was only slowly making up his mind which of the two, France or Spain, he should attack. Blake is said to have been strongly inclined towards a war with Spain, doubtless on the religious question; and in this he represented the English feeling of Elizabethan times, which was by no means extinct. Cromwell, as a puritan, felt with Blake, and Cardinal Mazarin knew how to influence him in favour of France; but a very much more practical consideration was probably the impelling cause. The English treasury was greatly in need of supply, and the people would not bear increased taxation. Spain was rich—at least in her gold and silver imports from America; her galleons might be waylaid, as in Elizabethan times, and her ocean trade might be sapped for the benefit of the English. France presented no such temptation. These were the leading ideas of Cromwell's policy, as it developed in the expeditions of Blake to the Mediterranean, and of Penn and Venables to the West Indies.

Blake set forth on the 29th September, 1654, his orders being judiciously wide as before. Speaking generally, he was to represent his country as the chief maritime power of the day—a position which had been assumed for some years by the Dutch—to teach the Italian Governments to respect English merchants, and to force the Barbary States to enter into some sort of civilized relation with the Christian world. In order to form a clear idea of his performance of the latter duty, we must omit some notices of this

first national assertion of English power in the Mediterranean. It is enough to say that it answered its purpose.

To take the pirate states in order; he began with Algiers, where he was civilly treated, though his demands for the release of English captives and compensation for piracy were most unsatisfactorily met. But at Tunis the dey defied him in set terms to do his worst, and prepared to make good his challenge by anchoring his nine men-of-war immediately opposite the mole of Porto Farino. These and the famous castle of Goletta, along with batteries specially erected in the port, were supposed to be impregnable to assault. Even Blake thought it wise to leave Tunis alone till he could come upon it by surprise. For this purpose he sailed off to Trapani. We can now quote his despatch—

"We met at a council of war at which it was resolved, by the permission of God, to put in execution our former intentions. Accordingly next morning [the 4th April, 1655] very early we entered with the fleet [of fourteen ships] into the harbour and anchored before their castles, the Lord being pleased to favour us with a gentle gale off the sea which cast all the smoke upon them, and made our work the more easy; for after some hours' dispute we set on fire all their ships, which were nine in number, and the same favourable gale still continuing, we retreated out again into the roads. We had 25 slain and about 40 hurt, with very little other loss. We are even now setting sail to go to Algiers, that being the only place that can afford us a considerable supply of bread and flesh, if they will."

The ships of Tunis were fired by boats, one of which

Blake ordered each ship to send while the fleet was subduing the fire of the castle. They were to row alongside the enemy's ships during the confusion, and throw inflammable materials into their ports. Stoakes, the flag-captain, performed this dangerous operation with complete success. The "favourable gale" which took the English ships in and out of the harbour seems to have been what sailors call a "soldier's wind,"—there and back again. The Dey of Tunis was thoroughly cowed, and when Blake once more summoned him, on his return from Tripoli, where he had demanded and obtained instant satisfaction, made complete submission and finally accepted the residence of a consular agent.

The despatches from the Mediterranean are of course addressed to Thurloe, Cromwell's secretary, and show conspicuous loyalty to the protector. Writing on the 14th March, 1655, he says, alluding to the plots of certain republicans, "I cannot but exceedingly wonder that there should yet remain so strong a prejudice and animosity in the minds of men who profess themselves most affectionate patriots." To use his own phrase—the "preservation of the commonwealth" takes precedence with him of all political considerations, just as it did at the very opening of the Civil War. The admiration of his great exploits was fully shared by the royalists, but it does not appear that he ever encouraged their sanguine belief that he would eventually take up their cause. When the country resolved to restore the Stuarts, would Blake have gone with Monck, Penn, Lawson, and Mountagu, or have retired to Switzerland like Ludlow? He was delivered by the hand of death from the pain of deciding.

We must now observe that this famous battle of Tunis affords a typical example of Blake's moral courage in undertaking responsibility. He had no orders to attack the Barbary strongholds, and one of his letters betrays a keen anxiety to know whether the protector approved of it. It was an unnecessary anxiety, for Cromwell sent (the 13th June) the warmest approval. This was his method of government. Very shortly afterwards he sent Penn and Venables to the Tower for their feeble conduct in the West Indies. He had no objection to the assumption of responsibility by his officers ; but it must succeed.

Blake's conduct at Algiers, soon after the affair at Tunis, deserves notice. The dey of that place was naturally much alarmed at what had occurred, and was glad to conclude a favourable treaty. Blake, on his side, was acting upon his general instructions in making terms; but while the negotiations were proceeding, several Dutch slaves swam off to the English ships. Blake insisted on their being honourably redeemed. In this emergency the seamen of the fleet generously subscribed to pay the sum required—a dollar for each slave. On the paying-off of two of his ships Blake discovered that this sum had not been deducted from their pay, and insisted on the matter being put to rights. He had no idea of a cheap philanthropy, nor of the government, in whose name he had probably advanced the money, being defrauded.

Having nearly completed his work in the Mediterranean, and being still uncertain of Cromwell's exact intentions with regard to Spain, Blake now took up his station off Cadiz in expectation of some definite orders. This cruising off Cadiz was trying to him on every account. However

fruitful his enterprises he keenly felt the isolation to which they had exposed him. Writing to Cromwell on the 30th of August, he says—"There is no place or friendship in the Mediterranean." His provisions run short, his ships require refitting. He has "only God to lean upon;" he has many infirmities; his fleet is full of sick men; he has been kept out too long. He wants more definite instructions. He had been on the point of attacking a Spanish fleet sent out from Cadiz to protect the plate fleet, which would soon be due. His council of war had been eager to engage; but the wind failing, "they came to consider the Instructions once again," and decided that they had no authority to fight. He had evidently missed Cromwell's letter of the 13th June, which gave him full authority to destroy both homeward-bound Spanish ships and outward-bound ships on their way to assist the Spanish in the West Indies. He now ran into the Tagus and anchored in Cascaes Bay.

He spent the winter in England, to which he returned on the 9th October. His complaints were fully attended to, and he was treated with every consideration. At his own request he was once more associated with a "general-at-sea," the young Mountagu, afterwards the famous Earl of Sandwich. This officer was as yet indeed little known, but the protector had observed his fine military qualities and taken him into his friendship. Together the two generals visited the dockyards, and made every exertion to equip another fleet. Blake was wholly unfit to go to sea again; but no one of his comrades in the Dutch war could be selected. Monck could not be spared from Scotland; Ayscue, Penn, and Lawson were either concerned, or suspected of being concerned, with royalist movements. Blake must go.

The various powers of the Peninsula and the Mediterranean were in a ferment. Their submission had been the effect of terror; Blake's name, like that of Nelson in after times, was worth a fleet. And so, in spite of his painful and depressing diseases, the hero set out for the last time, in March 1656 at the head of forty ships.

There was to be no more hesitation about the Spanish treasure-fleets. Blake was to resume his vigilant guard of the Spanish coast, while, if possible, the river Tagus was to be used for a base of operations. For this purpose King John of Portugal was to be forced into a civility which he was reluctant to show; and Blake succeeded in that object by threatening him with the capture of the expected Brazil fleet if he refused to give compensation for the losses which English merchants had sustained at the hand of Prince Rupert while he was under the king's protection. This painful policy was carried into effect by Blake with his usual courtesy, though his younger associate advised a more vigorous mode of action. On the 19th June, writing to Cromwell from Cascaes bay, he reports the serious nature of the news he has received from Algiers, where there were thirty men-of-war ready for sea, and where they were continually building new frigates. He ends with declaring his readiness for "the service of your highness, unto which I stand firmly devoted, and shall endeavour, as much as God shall enable me, to the hazard of all that is dear to me in this world, to give real manifestations." Well aware of the dangers gathering round the one man who seemed able to "preserve the commonwealth," Blake wished him to understand that he at least might be depended upon.

Blake and Mountagu had now before them a most

arduous task, that of keeping the sea during the autumn and winter on the dangerous coast of Spain, watching for the plate fleet, and dealing as best they might with the neighbouring powers. The open bay of Cadiz gave no protection from the furious gales of the season. In one of these Blake's ship was all but destroyed by another, which had become unmanageable. Amongst other things they had to satisfy Cromwell that it was impossible to take either Cadiz or Gibraltar without a considerable body of troops. It was a proof of that great man's enterprise and prudence that he should recommend the measure to his officers and abide by their decision: it was creditable to them that they resolved not to court defeat, even to please the lord protector. On receiving their report he recalled Mountagu, with some of the ships which were wanted for home service.

Not long before Mountagu sailed an important event occurred. The generals had left Captain Stayner, with seven light ships, to watch Cadiz while they sailed to the Portuguese coast. To this able officer fell the good fortune of meeting the eight ships of the plate fleet, so long expected, making for Cadiz and not far from port. Misled by false intelligence, they found themselves overmatched by Stayner and two of his squadron which alone were with him. They defended themselves with spirit, and were only conquered after a severe conflict; two, however, made their escape. The amount of treasure taken was very large. Paraded through the southern counties to London in thirty-eight wagons, it was the first harvest of the war which the people of England had seen with their own eyes. A declaration of war was now at last issued.

The enfeebled chief was again left alone, but he had one more exploit to achieve, and that was his greatest. Hearing that the other long-delayed plate fleet had put into the port of Santa Cruz in the island of Teneriffe, he instantly sailed in quest of it in the Swiftsure, of 60 guns, at the head of twenty-five ships. His own modest despatch tells the story :—

"After spending several days at Cadiz, and not finding the enemy forward to come forth, it was decided to go to Santa Cruz, where we arrived on the 20th April (1657), and found that the West India fleet was in the harbour, five or six galleons, three being flag-ships, and sixteen others, some laden for and some from the Indies, having brass ordnance and their full complement of men. We resolved to attack them, though they were moored close along the shore, which was lined with musketeers, and commanded by the castle and six or seven forts. Yet in four hours they were beaten, and all the ships driven ashore except the admiral and vice-admiral, which resisted most; but by 2 p.m. one was fired and the other blew up, and by evening all the rest were fired except two that were sunk, and only their masts appeared above water. To complete the mercy, our own ships got off well, though some were maimed and had to be warped off, and the wind blew right into the bay, and the forts and castle continued to play upon us. We had only 50 slain and 120 wounded, and our ships so soon repaired that in two days we sailed to our former station near St. Mary's, where we arrived on the 2nd May. To God be all the glory." Appended to the despatch are the words—"With names of seventeen commanders of Spanish ships, five of which were burned in Santa Cruz harbour."

An extract from the little-known autobiography of Thomas Lurting, boatswain's mate of the Bristol, 44 guns, may throw some light on Blake's brief despatch. He had "the command of 200 men in this ship"—probably as acting boatswain.[1] "The wind," he says, "blew very right on the shore, and we coming in, in a latter squadron [Blake having sent in a first division under Stayner, and the Bristol apparently being the rear ship of his own division], went under our general's stern to know where we should be; and were answered—'Where we could get room.' So we ran in, but could get no room to bring up our ship; so we went astern of all our ships . . . And when we had brought up our ship we were about half a cable's length from the vice-admiral, just in his wake, or in the head of him; and our captain called to me to make all ready, or get to veer nearer the galleon; 'for I will,' said he, 'be on board the vice-admiral.' So we veered to be on board of him; and so fast as we veered towards him, he veered from us, until he came about a musket shot of the shore. Then the captain called to me to get a hawser out of the gun-room port, and clap a spring on the cable. When done we veered our cable and lay just across his hawse, about half a musket shot from him. Then we run all the guns we could on that side towards him, which were in number 28 or 30, and all hands went to it in earnest. And the second broadside some of our shot, as we judged, fell into his powder-room, and she blew up, not one escaping that we could perceive. Then the Spanish admiral [each of these galleons carrying 50 guns, as he says else-

[1] The boatswain at this period took very much the place of a lieutenant, of whom there were very few.

where] was going to serve us as we had served his vice-admiral; which we perceiving, plyed him very close with about 28 or 30 guns, and the third broadside all his men leaped overboard, and instantly she blew up" . . . He then describes the narrow escapes he experienced in setting fire to three galleons which had been run on shore and how, on working out of the harbour, the great castle fired at his ship, but she was so close that the shot went over her hull.

In so brief a sketch there is no room for comment on this remarkable exploit. Writers of all parties concurred in unbounded admiration at the time; and on account of its contrast to the failure of Nelson on the same spot, its fame is still perhaps as great as it ever was. Cromwell sent his highest approbation of Blake's "wisdom in the conduct and courage in the execution of this service," and also a portrait of himself in gold and diamonds, for which parliament paid. A Day of Thanksgiving was also voted. It was the last of the many such Days for which this faithful officer had given cause. We hear of him but once more before he takes advantage of the permission which is now granted him to return home. On the 8th July the British consul at Lisbon reports that "Blake had redeemed all the captives at Sallee and concluded a peace" with that government. Thus the chain was complete. All the pirate-ports had been brought to terms. The dying admiral had done his work. The evidence of the effect produced by his victories in the whole west of Europe must have gratified the hero, however little he cared for glory or wealth, so long as he did his duty.

"The general is very weak," reports the same consul.

Scurvy and dropsy had numbered his days. For the last time he hoists his flag on board the George, which cast anchor at Plymouth Sound on the 17th August, 1657, but she only brought in the dead body of the hero. Blake had died two hours before. Clarke, the captain, reported that the general was very desirous to be ashore, and if God saw it good, that He would add some days to his life for settling of his estate [apparently some alteration in the will which he had left when he sailed for the Mediterranean], "but his course was finished, and his memorial shall be blessed." A splendid funeral at the public expense, and a vault in Westminster Abbey awaited his honoured remains. The indignity of "disturbing his bones" frequently laid at the door of the restoration, appears to resolve itself into a removal of them, along with others, from the abbey to the churchyard in a manner not otherwise than respectful. No place could indeed have been too sacred or too exalted for such an interment. Should not some attempt be made to localize so noble a fame even at this interval of time? Was he not one of the makers of England? A bust may yet be placed in the Abbey, but Blake's native town has taken the initiative. The patriotic inhabitants of Bridgwater have appropriately selected the present year, 1898, the Tercentenary of their hero's birth, to raise a subscription for the purpose of erecting a statue to his honour on the Cornhill of that ancient town.

In marking out the distinctive points in this great man's career we have observed his singular preparation for the work which lay before him, his sincerity and consistency in acting up to his lights, his roll of brilliant deeds, with which scarcely any other naval officer can compete, and the broad

mark he left on the history of his country. But the true splendour of Blake's life, apart from his glorious acts, shines forth from his spotless character, his perfect simplicity, his absolute contempt of private gain, his humane care for his comrades in battle, his generosity, his freedom from ambition, and his sacrifice of the domestic happiness which was very dear to him on the altar of the public service.

The legacy left by Blake to his successors in command of fleets has been sufficiently indicated. It was that forts were by no means so formidable against ships as they had been previously reckoned. This of course supposed ships to be properly equipped, officers and crews thoroughly efficient, and the spirit which animated them to be of the same gallant temper as his own. This spirit we have seen that he knew well how to infuse; nor did any one of his successors in navy or army—not even Nelson or Wellington, exceed him in his single-hearted devotion to duty, whatever the odds against him, or whatever might be the consequences. It may also be claimed for Blake that he was the first to organize the navy and the various administrations connected with it on a uniform plan—in fact, the man who, more distinctly than any one else, superintended the development of the machinery created by the Tudor princes into the form and fashion of modern times.

ROOKE

Rooke.

IV

SIR GEORGE ROOKE

GEORGE ROOKE, the second son of Sir William Rooke of St. Lawrence, Canterbury, Sheriff of Kent, was born in 1650. He first served in the navy as a volunteer in the second Dutch war. In 1672 he was a lieutenant of the London, the flag-ship of Sir Edward Spragge, in the battle of Solebay. In the following year he was again with Spragge in the Royal Prince, in the action of the 4th June; and remained in command of that ship when she was disabled, and Spragge shifted his flag to the St. George. In November he was promoted to the command of the Holmes, from which ship he took post rank—to use the expression of the day. Subsequently he commanded the Nonsuch, the Hampshire, and the St. David, in the Mediterranean, under Narbrough and Herbert (afterwards Earl of Torrington). In 1689 he commanded the Deptford of 50 guns. In her he took part in the battle of Bantry Bay, and was afterwards sent with a small squadron to the relief of Londonderry, which was then undergoing the famous siege, and was hard-pressed.

It cannot be said that Rooke distinguished himself on this occasion. Either he did not clearly understand his

orders, did not appreciate the extreme importance of relieving the garrison, or was not aware of the great straits to which they were reduced. For some unknown reason he lay idle in Lough Foyle for nearly six weeks,[1] and finally the boom was broken and the brave garrison relieved by Captain Leake in the Dartmouth, with Rooke's permission rather than by his orders.

In May 1690 Rooke was made a rear-admiral, and with his flag flying in the Duchess of 90 guns he took part in the battle of Beachy Head under Lord Torrington, where the English fleet, having got somewhat the worst of it, was forced to retreat to the eastward, and take refuge behind the Gunfleet shoal at the mouth of the Thames.

The most interesting period of Rooke's career was undoubtedly that during which he commanded fleets, usually combined fleets of English and Dutch; and when he is censured (as he frequently is) by historians, for his apparent want of decision, his hesitation in taking the initiative, and the frequency with which he called his councils of war, it should in justice be remembered that these joint commands were very puzzling affairs. For instance, in the abortive expedition against Cadiz in 1702, Rooke had not only to consult the Dutch admirals before any decisive action could be taken, but as it was a joint army and navy expedition, the Duke of Ormonde, who commanded the troops, had also to be consulted; and we find that, at such consultations, not only the chiefs of the

[1] [Macaulay and other writers have represented the squadron as under the command of Kirke. This is certainly erroneous, though it is highly probable that Rooke was instructed to co-operate and take counsel with Kirke. It will be seen that the "council of war" was the curse of Rooke's life.]

English and Dutch fleets, and the chiefs of the English and Dutch troops were present, but also all the junior admirals and generals; sometimes also captains and colonels.

At a council of war held on board the Ranelagh, off Cadiz, in September 1702, we find that the following officers formed the council:—Admiral Sir George Rooke, Lieutenant-Admiral Almonde, Vice-Admiral Hopsonn, Vice-Admiral Vandergoes, Vice-Admiral Pieterson, Sir Stafford Fairborne, Rear-Admiral Baron Wassenaer, Rear-Admiral Graydon, the Duke of Ormonde, Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Bellasis, Lord Portmore, Baron Sparr, Sir Charles Hara, Brigadier Poland, Brigadier Seymour, Brigadier Hamilton. Sixteen of them! Small wonder that there was lack of vigorous and decisive action. War seems to be an exception to the rule that "in the multitude of councillors there is wisdom."

Councils of war were the custom at this time, and it was not until later that we discovered they were only a hindrance to a capable commander—a sure source of vacillation and delay.

It is not easy to form a correct estimate of Rooke's true character and abilities as an admiral, and the place that duly belongs to him in the ranks of our great sea-captains. All the records and histories of his time are so obviously biased by personal considerations, or by rabid party feeling, that it is difficult to arrive at the truth, even as to the bare facts of what took place; and when we come to motives, we can well understand that the best and purest are not usually attributed to political enemies.

Party politics were a serious business in those days: it

was not merely a question of the "inns" and the "outs," and the spoils of office; it was revolution, civil war, impeachment, the dethroning of a king, the change of a dynasty. Men's passions ran high, and political opponents abused each other in no measured terms. Thus we find that that distinguished divine, Bishop Burnet, whose *History of his Own Time* is sometimes spoken of as a standard authority for the history of this period, hated Rooke with that perfect hatred which casteth out fear, and never lost an opportunity of attributing to him the worst motives, or accusing him of the most pusillanimous and unpatriotic conduct. Indeed, in the short sketch which it is proposed to give of the life of Rooke as an English admiral, we cannot do better than employ the bishop as *advocatus diaboli*, in which *rôle* he will prove very useful.

It has already been recorded that Rooke was made a rear-admiral in 1690, and, as rear-admiral of the red squadron, took part in the battle of Beachy Head, with his flag flying in the Duchess of 90 guns. The battle of Beachy Head ended in the retreat of the English fleet, and in the trial by court-martial of Lord Torrington, who commanded it. Torrington was acquitted of all blame, and it is said that Rooke's evidence at the court-martial justified the conduct and the strategy of his commander-in-chief; a justification which has been repeated and emphasized by several of our more recent naval historians.

In January 1692 Rooke was made vice-admiral of the blue squadron, and as such he took part in the battle of Barfleur, with his flag flying in the Neptune. The combined fleet of English and Dutch ships was commanded by Admiral Russell, afterwards Earl of Orford, and the

French by the Comte de Tourville. Louis XIV had collected an army of French and Irish troops at La Hogue, with the object of making a descent on the English coast, marching quickly on London, and, with the assistance of the English Jacobites, replacing James II on the throne; but, as a preliminary to this, it was necessary that he should gain at least temporary command of the Channel. He ordered a powerful fleet to be got together under the command of Tourville, and to anticipate the junction of the English and Dutch fleets. The orders were not obeyed; but he took for granted they would be, and sent Tourville orders to fight the English; then, finding that the Dutch had joined them, he sent Tourville orders not to fight; but these latter orders were not received by Tourville until the day of the battle. The whole business is a curious illustration of the absurdity of giving the command of a fleet at sea to a civilian on shore. Bishop Burnet gives the following brief account of the battle of Barfleur, or La Hogue, as it is sometimes called.

"On the 19th May, Russell came up with the French, and was almost twice their number; yet not above the half of his ships could be brought into action by reason of the winds: Rooke, one of his admirals, was thought more in fault. The number of the ships that were engaged was almost equal . . . The night and a fog separated the two fleets after an engagement that had lasted some hours. The greatest part of the French fleet drew near their coasts; but Russell, not casting anchor as the French did, was carried out by the tide; so next morning he was some distance from them. A great part of the French fleet sailed westward through a dangerous sea called the Race of Alderney. Ashby was sent to pursue them, and he

followed them some leagues; but then the pilots pretending danger, he came back; so twenty-six of them, whom, if Ashby had pursued, by all appearance he had destroyed them all, got into St. Malo. Russell came up to the French admiral and the other ships that had drawn near the coast. Delavall burnt the admiral and his two seconds, and Rooke burnt sixteen more before La Hogue."

Commenting on this, the Earl of Dartmouth has remarked—"Was it for burning sixteen of the enemy's ships, or for the wind not serving, that Rooke was so much in fault? For the bishop has specified nothing else to support a party lie that he would willingly have pass for truth, because he hated the man." Campbell,[1] too, has a very different account of Rooke's conduct in the battle of La Hogue, where, he says—

"He behaved with distinguished courage and conduct, and it was owing to his vigorous behaviour that the last stroke was given, which threw the French entirely into confusion, and forced them to run such hazards, in order to shelter themselves from their victorious enemies. But the 23rd May was for him still more glorious; for he had orders to go into La Hogue, and burn the enemy's ships as they lay. There were thirteen large men-of-war, which had crowded as far up as possible, and the transports, tenders, and ships with ammunition, were disposed in such a manner that it was thought impossible to burn them; and besides, the French camp was in sight, with all the French and Irish troops that were to have been employed in the invasion, and several batteries upon the coast were supplied with heavy artillery. Notwithstanding this, the vice-admiral made the necessary preparations for obeying his orders, but, when he came to make the attempt, he found

[1] *Lives of the British Admirals.*

it impossible to carry in the ships of his squadron. He thereupon ordered his light frigates to ply in close to the shore, and, having manned all his boats, went himself to give directions for the attack, burned that very night six three-decked ships, and the next day he burned six more of from 76 to 60 guns, and destroyed the thirteenth, which was a ship of 56 guns, together with most of the transports and ammunition vessels, and this under the fire of all those batteries I have before mentioned, in sight of the French and Irish troops; and yet, through the wise conduct of their commander, this bold enterprise cost the lives of no more than ten men."

The Dutch admiral, Van Almonde, reported to his Government the destruction of the French ships at La Hogue, and gave a glowing description of the enterprise. It does not appear that he knew the name of the admiral who conducted it; so that it is scarcely possible his account can be otherwise than strictly impartial. We may therefore fairly conclude that in spite of Bishop Burnet's carping criticisms, Rooke's conduct at La Hogue was all that could be desired. At any rate, his sovereign (William III) commended him; and in the following spring, when King William visited Portsmouth, he dined on board Rooke's ship, and knighted him. It is stated also that the king conferred on him a pension of £1000 for life: but this appears to be at least doubtful. Such rewards were usually reserved by William for his own countrymen.

Rooke's next service was the convoy of the Smyrna fleet. A large fleet of 400 English and Dutch merchant ships had long been waiting for convoy to the Levant. A powerful French fleet lay at Brest, and another at Toulon. Concerning the movements of the French the English had but little

intelligence, and that, generally false; the French, on the other hand, seem to have been well-informed of all that was done or spoken of in England. This was not surprising, for the Jacobite party was strong, and treachery was suspected—not without reason—even in the highest quarters. Be that as it may, Rooke's convoy met with dire disaster; and an angry controversy, with mutual recriminations, took place in consequence. It is certain that the English admiralty did not take proper means to ascertain whether the Brest squadron had or had not sailed and gone to the southward. How far the admiralty and how far the admirals were to blame for this neglect it is now difficult to say. In May 1693 Rooke sailed with his 400 merchant ships; to protect which he had thirteen ships, of from 40 to 60 guns, six smaller vessels, and eight Dutch ships under Vice-Admiral Vandergoes. The great value of this merchant fleet rendered special precautions necessary, and the whole Channel fleet, under the joint admirals—Delavall, Killigrew, and Shovell[1]—was ordered to see them well past Brest, and thus, as it was deemed, out of danger; for it was still assumed that the main body of the French fleet lay at that port.

Accordingly the Channel fleet accompanied Rooke and his convoy to a point 150 miles SW of Ushant, and then returned home. Rooke sailed on without a thought of danger, and shortly after rounding Cape St. Vincent, he found himself in the presence of an overwhelming force of the enemy; in fact, of the whole navy of France, for the

[1] [The command of the Channel fleet was at this time "in commission," a fact that may have had more to do with the disaster than has been commonly supposed.]

Toulon and Brest fleets had formed a junction, and lay in ambuscade for him in Lagos Bay. Against such a force nothing could be done. The convoy and the fleet of merchantmen dispersed and fled; many of the latter were captured, and Rooke went first to Madeira and then came home to Cork. Bishop Burnet, describing the "sudden and unprovided motion of the French fleet"—the sailing of the divisions from Brest and Toulon, though "neither completely manned nor victualled"—adds, "it looked as if some secret advice had been sent from England, acquainting them with our designs."

The whole transaction undoubtedly looked like treachery. Nor can we be surprised at it, when we think of the divided state of public opinion in England during the reigns of William and Mary and of Queen Anne, and indeed for some years later; and when we remember that even the great Marlborough stands convicted of playing a double game, and of intriguing with James and the enemies of England at St. Germains, after betraying him to William and assisting the latter to seize his father-in-law's crown. It must be recorded to the credit of Rooke, that even his bitterest enemy does not accuse him of any double dealing in the case of the Smyrna convoy; and though the fact that he escaped with most of his ships of war might have lent some colour to the suggestion had it been made, he does not seem to have come in for any share of the blame for this disaster. He was, indeed, examined at the bar of the House of Commons; but had no difficulty in showing that, on some imperfect and suspicious intelligence of French ships to the southward he had proposed to proceed cautiously, and would have passed the enemy in the night;

but had been overruled by the majority of the council, not, he believed, "from any bad design or want of zeal in the commanders, but from their not giving credit to his suspicion that it was the whole French fleet in Lagos Bay." Rooke was fully acquitted, but the feeling in England was very bitter. The three admirals of the Channel fleet were blamed; the admiralty was blamed; and blame went as high as the secretary of state, who, it was suggested, had been guilty of treachery. On the other hand, the Earl of Hardwicke says—

"I have read many papers relative to this miscarriage, and do not think there was any *criminal management* on the part of the admirals, but undoubtedly an indecisive, unskilful conduct, such as generally attends a divided command[1] and calling of frequent councils of war. The admirals were defective in not sending more frequently to look into Brest; as, knowing where the French lay, would have been the best rule for their own conduct."

This censure does not affect Rooke, who was only a subordinate in the matter; he simply did what he was told to do; and by the unanimous testimony of all who have written about it, he did it extremely well. Campbell gives him the highest credit for the dexterous manner in which he got out of the difficulty, and saved most of his squadron and many of his merchant ships. According to the Dutch, the loss, great as it was, would have been much greater but for the prudence of Rooke. Even Burnet "does not pretend to find out one wrong step in this whole proceed-

[1] [Everywhere divided; divided in the Grand Fleet, divided in the squadron with Rooke, who could do nothing without consulting his Dutch colleagues and the Council of War.]

ing;" and Dumont, a Frenchman, though an exile in Holland, wrote that—

"Rooke acquired infinitely more honour than those who commanded the French fleet. For, though unable to resist such as attacked him, yet, by his prudence, dexterity, and courage, he saved the best part of the fleet committed to his charge, whilst the others suffered themselves to be deprived, by his superior skill, of a booty which fortune put into their hands."

In the spring of 1697 Admiral Russell was made Earl of Orford, and placed at the head of the admiralty; and Rooke was appointed to command the Channel fleet, which put to sea "in a very indifferent condition; half-manned, and scarcely half-victualled." The French, however, did not come out to fight, and Rooke was therefore not able to perform any great services; though he detained and sent in for adjudication a fleet of Swedish merchant ships. Out of this action there arose a heated controversy, as we were not at war with Sweden; but it was proved that the ships, though sailing under Swedish colours, were either chartered or owned by French merchants and were carrying French cargoes. So they were duly condemned as lawful prizes; the nation was enriched, and our enemies impoverished.

The next important service upon which Rooke was employed was in 1700, when he was placed in command of a combined fleet of English and Dutch ships sent to the Baltic to support Charles XII of Sweden against the Danes. This extraordinary youth, who was at this time only sixteen years of age, and had succeeded his father in the previous year, was just commencing his short, but

marvellously brilliant career. There was a combination of the northern powers to attack him and despoil him of his dominions; but the Anglo-Dutch king came to his rescue, and sent Rooke to the Sound, to "preserve the peace of the North"; and this he did with much expenditure of ammunition. It was a curious business altogether, this expedition to the Baltic, requiring much tact and patience on the part of the admiral in command. It was not war, and it was not peace. We exchanged courtesies with the Danes, saluting their admirals and officers of State, as they did ours; but, at the same time, we shook our fists at each other, and were ready to let the guns off at any moment. Finally, it ended with what might be called a "bogus" bombardment of Copenhagen; a very different affair from what took place there just a hundred years later under another admiral.

The Danes had a fleet, and the Swedes had a less powerful fleet; but the Anglo-Dutch and the Swedes together by far out-numbered the Danes; and the latter tried to bar the passage of the Sound and prevent the junction of the allies. This they were unable to do, and after a good deal of manœuvring amongst the shoals, and some threatened attacks, the Danes retired under cover of their fortifications; where Rooke amused them with an insincere bombardment. "I was sent here to serve your Majesty, but not to ruin the King of Denmark," he answered Charles, who complained that the English bombs flew over and the Dutch fell short of the Danish fleet. The threat, the display of force was, however, sufficient; the object of the expedition was gained, and peace was signed between Denmark and Sweden on the 18th of

August 1700. This left King Charles free to turn his forces against the Tsar Peter, afterwards known as the Great, who had treacherously attacked him behind his back, on the absurd plea of an imaginary insult.[1] Charles fell upon the Russians with his wonted impetuosity, and smote them, at Narva, with a very great slaughter.

With the peace, the combined Anglo-Dutch fleet returned home, and the states-general were so well satisfied with the result of the expedition, that they thanked King William for having entrusted the command of it to Rooke. As to which, Campbell says—

"When Sir George Rooke was so unlucky as to labour under the displeasure of a powerful party in England, he was known and acknowledged in Holland to be the best officer and the greatest seaman of the age. This, perhaps, was the reason, that, notwithstanding the difference of parties, King William always preserved a good opinion of him, and employed him as long as he lived in the most important commands."

The services, however, by which Rooke's name will live in history were rendered to William's successor, during the war of the Spanish succession. This, which was the outcome of the determination of the great powers to curb the ambition of Louis XIV, broke out on the death of Charles II of Spain, when Louis attempted to place his own grandson, Philip, Count of Anjou, on the vacant throne. Against him, the Grand Alliance, consisting of the Empire, England, and Holland, put forward the Archduke Charles

[1] Peter's excuse was, that he had been refused permission to inspect the Swedish fortifications at Riga. He said this was an insult, and on this plea he declared war against Sweden; and he got what he deserved.

of Austria, the second son of the emperor. For Spain itself, this meant civil war. The province of Catalonia was ready to accept Charles, not out of any preference for the House of Austria, but because Philip, as the nominee of the late king, was more or less favoured by the rest of Spain. To the Catalans, the chance of showing that they were not Spaniards was irresistible.

On the 1st July, 1702, a powerful Anglo-Dutch fleet consisting of fifty sail of the line—thirty English and twenty Dutch—besides numerous smaller vessels and transports, sailed from St. Helens under the chief command of Sir George Rooke, for the purpose of attacking Cadiz. It carried with it 13,000 troops—9000 English and 4000 Dutch—commanded by the Duke of Ormonde. But the object was peculiar, and more than a little vague. We were not at war with the Spaniards ; we had no grudge against them, and did not want to hurt them, further than was necessary to coerce them into supporting the House of Austria against the Bourbons, in the struggle for the Spanish crown. This, however, the Andalusians, at any rate, objected to.

The Grand fleet and army arrived in front of Cadiz on the 12th August, and anchored at a distance of two leagues from the city. A council of war was immediately held, when the Duke of Ormonde insisted on landing at once and making a sudden and vigorous attack upon the town, which, as the consternation was very great, would in all probability have succeeded ; but, as several of the council, and especially the sea-officers, opposed this, it was resolved, that the army should first take St. Catherine's fort and Port St. Mary's.

On the following day the Duke of Ormonde summoned Fort St. Catherine, at the same time sending the governor a message that if he did not accept the terms, he should be hanged, and his men put to the sword. The governor is said to have answered that if he must be hanged anyway, he would rather be hanged by the Duke of Ormonde than by the governor of Cadiz, and that therefore he would defend the port entrusted to him by his king—the Bourbon king.

Rooke is said to have been altogether opposed to the proceedings of his colleagues, considering—as was, indeed, common-sense—that they were scarcely calculated to win the Spaniards to declare for the House of Austria; and his instructions were to protect the people of the country, not to provoke them. Ormonde read his instructions differently, and once on shore, was able to act with a degree of independence which aggravated the difficulties of Rooke's position. And that, in itself, was bad enough. His mission was, in its nature, somewhat similar to that against the Danes, and was equally ambiguous. It was war and not war. The Spaniards were to be conciliated and protected; and their fair city of Cadiz was to be bombarded, and captured if necessary, just to show them how much we loved them and sought their welfare. Our admirals have generally known what to do when ordered to fight; but when told to coerce people without hurting them, they have not always known exactly how to do it.

The expedition against Cadiz was a miserable failure. Divided command, chronic disagreement between the naval and military commanders, frequent councils of war, which

appear to have decided nothing, except to do nothing, were sufficient causes to produce failure, even if the allies had not found Cadiz stronger and better defended than they expected.

The Duke of Ormonde undoubtedly wanted to fight, and would have been glad to fight anybody. He wanted to attack the island and town of Cadiz ; but was overruled by his colleagues, and a compromise was made by allowing him to attack Fort St. Catherine and Port St. Mary's on the shore opposite to Cadiz. This was done, and these positions were captured, and the latter was shamefully plundered, the plunderers being led by two general officers —Sir Henry Bellasis, and Sir Charles Hara. Both these officers were put under arrest ; Bellasis was dismissed the service, and Hara, though he escaped public condemnation, did not escape private censure.

But neither the bombardment of Fort Matagorda, the capture of Fort St. Catherine and Port St. Mary's, nor the plunder of the private property of the inhabitants, proved to be a sufficient inducement to these stubborn Andalusians to espouse the cause of the House of Austria. And after several more councils of war had been held by the allied commanders, it was finally resolved to abandon all idea of attacking the town of Cadiz, to embark the troops, and to sail for England before the winter set in.

Bishop Burnet, our *advocatus diaboli* in the case of Rooke, tells us with regard to this ill-starred expedition, that, in the first place, "Rooke delayed the sailing of it from England by giving out falsely that the Dutch ships were insufficiently provisioned, a statement which the Dutch admiral promptly contradicted ;" and, in the second,

that "Rooke spoke so coldly of the design he went upon before he sailed, that those who conversed with him were apt to infer that he intended to do the enemy as little harm as possible."[1] He says too—

"Advice was sent from Holland of a fleet that sailed from France and was ordered to call in at Corunna. Sir John Munden was recommended by Rooke to be sent against this fleet; but though he came up to them with a superior force, yet he behaved himself so ill, and so unsuccessfully, that a council of war was ordered to sit on him. They indeed acquitted him; some excusing themselves by saying that, if they had condemned him, the punishment was death; whereas they thought his errors flowed from a want of sense; so that it would have been hard to condemn him for a defect of that which nature had not given him. Those who recommended him to the employment seemed to be more in fault."

There is a strong temptation to say that in writing this travesty of a well-known trial, Burnet was wilfully and maliciously lying. But, in any case, it affords a good illustration of the spiteful manner in which he slanders Rooke on every possible occasion, regardless alike of truth and logic.

A squadron had been detached to the West Indies, and the main body of the fleet was on its way home to England when Rooke received information, picked up at Lagos by Captain Hardy, that the Spanish treasure fleet, escorted by a strong French squadron, had put into the port of Vigo. Here, then, was a lucky opportunity for the allied commanders to wipe out their failure at Cadiz, make some prize money, and strike a heavy blow at their real enemy; and they quickly decided to take advantage of it.

[1] Rooke might well ask who the enemy was.

The Spanish galleons and their French escort had secured themselves in the inner harbour of Vigo, off the small town of Redondela. The French commodore had constructed a formidable boom, with which he barred the entrance, the ends of the boom being protected by batteries on the shore; but these defences were of no avail against the onslaught of Rooke's sailors and Ormonde's soldiers, when they really meant fighting, and had no doubt about who were their enemies.

The Duke landed with 5000 troops, and captured the battery at the south end of the boom. Vice-Admiral Hopsonn in the Torbay, sailed in under a heavy fire and broke the boom; the other ships that had been detailed to support him followed, and in a very short time the whole of the Franco-Spanish fleet was either burnt, captured, sunk, or run ashore.

We are fortunate in having a graphic account of all this in the *Life of Captain Stephen Martin*, who commanded one of the bomb vessels present in the action. He wrote—

"Early in the morning all the boats of the fleet were employed in landing the soldiers, to the number of 5000, in order to attack the fort on the starboard side, and the Barfleur to batter it by sea; and the Association to do the like on the larboard side. A line of twenty-four sail was appointed to attack the boom and force the harbour, Vice-Admiral Hopsonn leading the van with five sail abreast; then a Dutch admiral and five sail, and then Sir Stafford Fairborne in the rear with five sail more, the bombs and fire-ships following close in the rear; and in this manner they made the attack.

"Admiral Hopsonn, with the first five, broke the boom, notwithstanding the fire from the battery and ships that

guarded it, but his foretopmast was shot away. He was no sooner entered than he was boarded by a fire-ship which burnt his foresail, but put herself off again with the way she had on coming on board, and soon after blew up; and being a merchant-ship laden with snuff, that in some measure extinguished the flames, but almost blinded and suffocated those that were near. This created such a consternation, that the first lieutenant, purser, and 100 men of Vice-Admiral Hopsonn's ship jumped overboard, the greater part of whom were drowned. While this was doing, the rest of the ships having got through as fast as they could, were all of a cluster; and Captain Martin with his ship being amongst the thickest, was so near the fire-ship that blew up, that the snuff drove into the sides of his ship, and made the planks of a snuff colour, discolouring everything on board. In short, in less than an hour's time we were masters of the forts and harbour. The French, as they quitted their ships, either set them on fire or blew them up; so that for some time there was nothing to be heard or seen but cannonading, burning, men and guns flying in the air, and altogether the most lively scene of horror and confusion that can be imagined. This confusion, in some measure, lasted all night, so that by the next morning all the ships, French and Spaniards, were destroyed or taken; viz.—of the French, ten men-of-war were taken; the remaining five, with two frigates and some smaller vessels, were burnt. Of the Spaniards, nine galleons were taken, the rest destroyed; and this victory was obtained with the loss of not above 200 men; but the enemy lost a great number, for besides what were killed in the fight and defence of their ships, the shores of the harbour were strewn with their bodies, blown up and drowned, and no small number were found on shore at a distance from the harbour, and some a considerable way up the country, whither they were come by the force of the gunpowder when the ships blew up."

The French and Spaniards had had the wit to land a considerable portion of the treasure before the attack took place; and although a goodly portion of specie was captured, yet it was only a small part of the enormous treasure which was brought by the galleons from the West Indies. It has only recently become known that all the government part of the present cargo was landed immediately on arrival, and sent over the mountains on the backs of mules. For many years it was believed that tons of silver ingots still lay concealed amongst the wrecks at the bottom of Redondela harbour; and, so late as twenty-five years ago, a French company was formed for the purpose of recovering this treasure, by means of modern diving appliances. Some large silver ingots were brought to the surface by the divers; but as these looked rather fresh after their immersion of nearly two hundred years, and no others followed them, it was popularly supposed that this submarine mine had been "salted."

After this success at Vigo the Duke of Ormonde proposed to winter there with his troops, ready to carry on the war in the interests of the House of Austria in the following spring; and he suggested that Rooke should leave a squadron with him for his protection and sustenance; but Rooke's instructions do not appear to have authorized him to do this, nor were his ships either stored or provisioned for such a service; so he refused to leave them, and the whole expedition returned to England.

During his absence from England Sir George Rooke had been returned to parliament as member for Portsmouth, and he now took his seat in the House of Commons. The queen also made him a privy councillor; and the House

of Commons, by the mouth of the Speaker, voted him its thanks, in somewhat inflated and exaggerated terms; to which Rooke made a modest reply. But in spite of these honours and congratulations, and the appointment of a day of public thanksgiving for the victory—an example which had been followed by the states-general—the House of Lords resolved to inquire into Rooke's conduct before Cadiz, in consequence of complaints which had been loudly made against him by the Duke of Ormonde, directly after his return to England.

"Accordingly a committee was appointed to examine into the whole affair; and this they did very effectually, not only by considering the instructions and other papers relating to the Cadiz expedition, but by sending for Sir George Rooke and the principal sea and land officers, all of whom were very strictly examined. Bishop Burnet admits that, in his defence, Sir George arraigned his instructions very freely, and took very little care of a ministry, which, according to the bishop, took so much care of him.

"The truth of the matter was, Sir George set the whole affair in its proper light. He showed that throughout the whole expedition the enemy had great advantages; for if it was considered on the peaceable side, they had a King of Spain, called to the succession by the will of the last king, and acknowledged by the best part of the nation; whereas the allies had then not set up any other king, but invited the Spaniards in general terms to support the interest of the House of Austria, which was very inconsistent with the temper and genius of a nation always distinguished for their loyalty; that, on the side of war, the instructions seemed to contradict themselves; for, whereas they were empowered to use hostility, the declaration promised peace and protection."[1]

[1] Campbell.

And a great deal more to the same effect, showing the ambiguity of the instructions, and the impossibility of carrying on a war with vigour, under such conditions as had existed. In the end, Rooke was acquitted of all blame, and his conduct entirely approved of; but of course, Burnet sneers at this decision, and states roundly that the verdict was against the evidence.

In October 1703 Rooke was sent over to Holland with a small squadron to embark the Archduke Charles of Austria, who had been declared King of Spain—by the allies. He was delayed for some time by contrary winds, and was still on the coast on the 26th November, when the Great Storm shattered his ships. Rooke was at the Hague at the time, but came down with all haste, and exerted himself to the utmost to repair damages and get his squadron ready for sea again; but it was the 26th December before he arrived at Spithead with the titular King of Spain on board.

In the following February (1704) Rooke took King Charles to Lisbon, the King of Portugal having, after some hesitation, taken the side of the allies. Rooke had only a portion of his fleet with him; the remainder, not being ready for sea, were ordered to follow him as soon as possible. The King of Spain (that is to say, the Austrian king; Philip, the Bourbon king, being actually in possession) landed in great state at Lisbon, and remained the guest of the King of Portugal to await the development of events.

The difficulty of Rooke's position at this time can scarcely be exaggerated. His general orders were to support the cause of the House of Austria against the

French, and if possible to put the archduke on the Spanish throne; but he had particular orders not to take any action without the concurrence of the Kings of Portugal and Spain—who, however, were themselves by no means in agreement as to the best course to be pursued. He had also positive orders from Queen Anne to relieve Nice and Villafranca, which were threatened by the French. He was further most strenuously urged by Prince George of Hesse-Darmstadt—one of the most gallant and capable generals on the side of the allies—to make an attack on Barcelona, where he was assured the inhabitants were ready to rise and declare for the Austrian cause with very little encouragement; such, for instance, as a mild bombardment. Furthermore, he was urged to make another attempt on Cadiz; and he also had to watch the two French fleets—intelligence having been received that another powerful fleet was fitting out at Brest.

The forces at Rooke's disposal appear to have been scarcely adequate to perform all these duties at the same time; and the end of it was that after some further discussions, he and Prince George, with twenty-three sail of the line—English and Dutch—besides smaller vessels, sailed for Barcelona, and arrived off the town on the 18th May.

Some Catalans who came on board gave Prince George to understand that the town was ripe for revolt, and that if some men were landed and a show of bombardment made, it would open the gates and declare for King Charles. So the next day some 1200 English and 400 Dutch marines were put on shore, where they were joined by a few Catalan volunteers—about 400 in all. A few

bombs were fired, but the town made no sign, the governor having taken the very obvious precaution of shutting up all the chiefs of the Austrian party. As the demonstration was altogether resting on the supposed readiness of the town to receive them, and it had never been intended to undertake the siege of an enemy's fortress with 1600 men, the troops were re-embarked, and Rooke took the squadron to the eastward, meaning to wait in the neighbourhood of the Hyères islands for the coming of the Brest fleet, which he had learned was on its way to Toulon. Bad weather, however, dispersed his ships, and they were barely collected together again when the French fleet was seen in the distance, too near Toulon to permit of its being overtaken—after the usual council of war—before it gained the shelter of the port. Burnet, of course, says that Rooke, by sailing in the opposite direction, took care not to overtake it; a statement that may have been made in ignorance, but has much more the appearance of being inspired by malice.

But the two divisions of the French fleet being now joined, it would clearly have been false strategy for Rooke to remain in the vicinity of the enemy's port with a greatly inferior force; he therefore left the Mediterranean with the view of falling back on Lisbon to await the reinforcements which he knew were coming to him; and on the 17th June, off Cape St. Mary, he fell in with Sir Clowdisley Shovell and his squadron. This additional force brought Rooke's fleet up to fifty-nine sail of the line—English and Dutch—so that he was now strong enough to meet the combined French squadron, should it put to sea from Toulon. But, as has already been pointed out, Rooke had

by no means a free hand as to his movements; and he was specially handicapped by that greatest hindrance to all prompt and vigorous action—frequent councils of war. Orders from home forbade him to attempt anything against the coasts of Spain, save with the approval of the Kings of Spain and Portugal, and as they had no troops to spare for a joint expedition, it appeared that there was nothing better to do than to sail to the eastward and look out for the French fleet, which had been reported off Malaga. No French fleet was to be seen, and Rooke, having watered his fleet near Malaga, was plying under the Barbary coast, when he received a pressing request from King Charles to make another attempt on Cadiz.

A council of war was of course held, and it was decided that such an enterprise was quite impracticable without troops; but it was suggested (it is not stated from whom came the happy thought) that, with the force at their disposal, an attack on Gibraltar might be successful. Rooke seems to have jumped at the idea. He immediately made his arrangements for putting it in execution, before another council of war should decide that it was impracticable; and, perhaps as a practical joke, entrusted the actual attack to Rear-Admiral Byng, who had voted against it.

The following is Rooke's official account of what happened,[1] and it would be impossible to improve upon it:—

"The 17th July, the fleet being then about seven leagues to the eastward of Tetuan, a council of war was held on board the Royal Catherine; wherein it was resolved to make a sudden attempt on Gibraltar. Accordingly the fleet sailed thither, and the 21st, got into that

[1] *London Gazette*, No. 4045.

bay; and, at three o'clock in the afternoon, the marines, English and Dutch, to the number of one thousand eight hundred, with the Prince of Hesse at the head of them, were put on shore on the neck of land to the northward of the town, to cut off any communication with the country. His Highness, having posted his men there, sent a summons to the governor to surrender the place for the service of his Catholic Majesty; which he rejected with great obstinacy. The admiral, on the 22nd, in the morning, gave orders that the ships which had been appointed to cannonade the town, under the command of Rear-Admiral Byng and Rear-Admiral Vanderdussen, as also those which were to batter the south mole head, commanded by Captain Hickes of the Yarmouth, should range themselves accordingly; but the wind blowing contrary they could not possibly get into their places till the day was spent. In the meantime, to amuse the enemy, Captain Whitaker was sent with some boats, who burnt a French privateer of twelve guns at the mole. The 23rd, soon after break of day, the ships being all placed, the admiral gave the signal for beginning the cannonade; which was performed with great fury, above fifteen thousand shot being made in five or six hours' time against the town, insomuch that the enemy were soon beat from their guns, especially at the south mole head; whereupon the admiral, considering that by gaining the fortification they should of consequence reduce the town, ordered Captain Whitaker with all the boats armed, to endeavour to possess himself of it; which was performed with great expedition. But Captain Hickes and Captain Jumper, who lay next the mole, had pushed on shore with their pinnaces and some other boats, before the rest could come up; whereupon the enemy sprung a mine that blew up the fortifications upon the mole,[1] killing

[1] [It is perhaps more probable that this was the accidental explosion of a magazine. A mine tells of greater prevision than the garrison seem to have been capable of.]

two lieutenants and about forty men, and wounded about sixty. However, our men kept possession of the great platform which they had made themselves masters of; and Captain Whitaker, landing with the rest of the seamen which had been ordered upon this service, they advanced and took a redoubt, or small bastion, half-way between the mole and the town, and possessed themselves of many of the enemy's cannon. The admiral then sent a letter to the governor, and at the same time a message to the Prince of Hesse to send him a peremptory summons, which his Highness did accordingly; and on the 24th in the morning, the governor desiring to capitulate, hostages were exchanged; and the capitulation being concluded, the prince marched into the town in the evening, and took possession of the land and north mole gates, and the outwork.

"The town is extremely strong, and had an hundred guns mounted, all facing the sea and the two narrow passes to the land, and was well supplied with ammunition. The officers who have viewed the fortifications affirm there never was such an attack as the seamen made; for that fifty men might have defended those works against thousands. Ever since our coming to the bay, great numbers of Spaniards have appeared on the hills, but none of them have thought fit to advance towards us."

Thus was Gibraltar lost and won. It was taken by the English and Dutch in the name of King Charles III of Spain; and if that prince had been successful in gaining the Spanish crown, it is scarcely possible to doubt that Gibraltar would have been immediately restored to the Spaniards. As, however, he was not successful, at the peace of Utrecht it was formally ceded to England as part of the spoils of war, and has since remained in her hands, though she has had to fight for it more than once. On the other

hand, if Gibraltar had not been captured by Rooke, it is extremely unlikely that the question of ceding it to England would have been even mooted at the peace.

Immediately after the capture of Gibraltar, the Dutch admiral wanted to go home, and detached six ships to Lisbon, saying that he would soon follow them. Rooke went to Tetuan with the remainder of the allied fleet to take in water, and on his way back to Gibraltar, on the 9th August, he sighted the French fleet under the command of the Count of Toulouse, the high admiral of France, who had with him fifty-two sail of the line, some frigates, fire-ships, etc., and twenty-four galleys. Rooke had with him fifty-three sail of the line and a few smaller vessels. About these numbers, which are proved by nominal lists of the fleets, there can be no real doubt; though French writers, by counting the six ships which had been sent to Lisbon, have persistently represented the allied fleet as consisting of fifty-nine or sixty ships of the line. So far the two fleets may be described as fairly equal; but English writers have not failed to point out that the allies had only seven three-decked ships against seventeen in the French fleet; that the galleys were a very important auxiliary—not, indeed, for fighting, but for towing and for carrying reinforcements; and above all, that several of the Anglo-Dutch ships were short of ammunition, having expended much at Gibraltar without a possibility of having their supply renewed. At any rate it would seem that the one extra sail of the line was at least balanced by certain advantages on the side of the French; and the two fleets were not unevenly matched.

It was the 9th August when the two fleets first sighted each

other, the French being then from twenty to thirty miles to the eastward. Of course there was a council of war, and a message was then sent to the small vessels, fire-ships, etc., to bring out the marines who had been left in garrison at Gibraltar. It was midday on the 10th before these marines were got on board, and by that time the French fleet was no longer in sight. All this time the wind was easterly, and from the first the French had had the option of fighting. That they did not avail themselves of it was in accordance with the strategical rules in vogue in the French navy. By these, some "ulterior objective" was the first consideration; the fleet was not at sea mainly to defeat, to smash the enemy's fleet, but aiming at some end which might be better won by avoiding action and so preserving the fleet uninjured. And here, the end to be aimed at was clearly marked out as the recapture of Gibraltar, which might be accomplished if the English fleet could be enticed away to the eastward; if the French fleet could get in between it and Gibraltar before the customary west wind blew through the Straits.

Through the evening of the 10th, through the 11th and the morning of the 12th, the English fleet worked slowly to the eastward. About noon on the 12th it was off Malaga, when, the haze clearing, the French fleet was seen to the NW in a fair position to interpose itself between the English and Gibraltar. It seems to have been a prevailing idea in the English fleet that the French had taken the trouble to send the Brest division of their navy to Toulon, and then to send the united fleet from Toulon to Malaga, merely to have the fun of avoiding battle. Possibly Rooke had had the same idea. If so, he now awoke to the under-

standing of a more intelligent design; and as he knew that the wind might at any time come westerly, he realized the necessity of engaging at once.

The wind, however, was so light that he was unable to do so on that day. On the morning of the 13th the position was but little changed, but the French were more to the southward, more immediately between the allies and Gibraltar, and, apparently meaning to stay there, were lying to in line of battle, with their heads to the south. The wind was still easterly, and Rooke, taking advantage of it, bore down on the enemy, and engaged him all along the line, van to van and rear to rear, according to the old fighting instructions which had been handed down to him from the days of Russell and the Duke of York; a method of fighting which sought to gain no tactical advantage, and which was unlikely to be decisive. And so it proved now; for after fighting from 10.30 a.m. till night closed in upon them, the two fleets separated without any advantage gained; but great damage was done on both sides, for they fought close; and many of the English ships expended all their ammunition.

On the following morning the two fleets were in sight of each other, about ten miles apart, and they spent the day in repairing damages. They remained in sight until the 16th, when they separated—it might be said, by mutual consent. The English went into Gibraltar; the French returned to Toulon. Of course each side claimed the victory. The French claimed that they had prevented the allies from attempting anything against Barcelona, or from relieving Nice or Villafranca—projects which had not been lately mooted; the allies claimed that they had prevented the

French from recapturing Gibraltar—which they had certainly wished to do—and had driven them back to Toulon. But probably there was never a bloodier battle fought at sea, with less, on either side, to show for it.

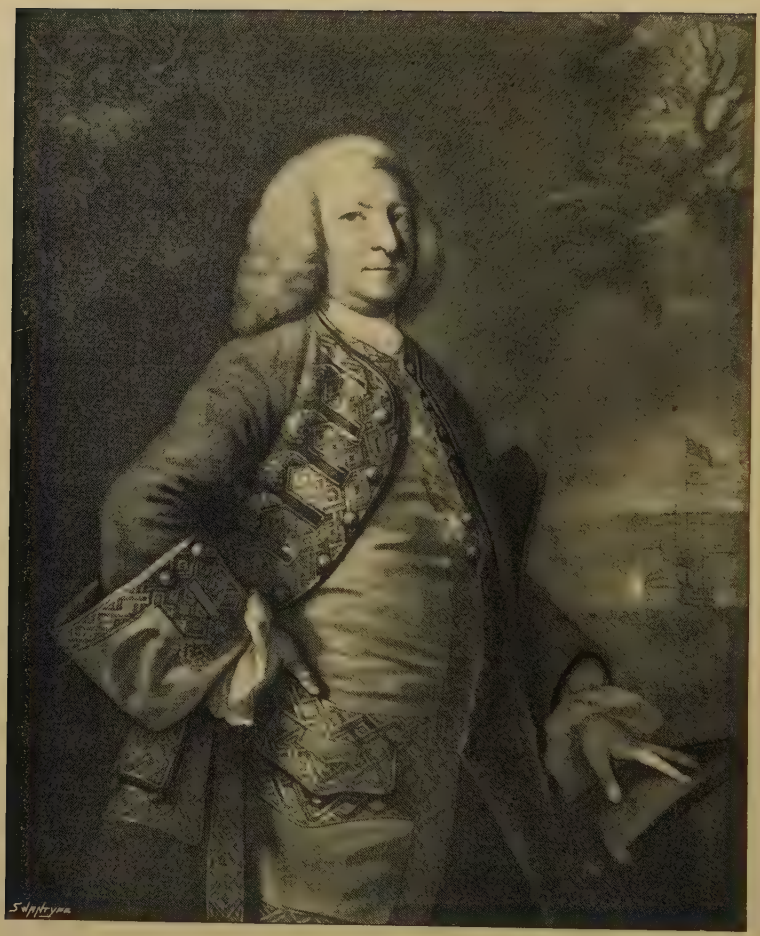
One result, however, it had. It ended Rooke's career. Rooke's political friends, maddened by the brilliant success of the campaign in Germany, put forward Rooke as at least the peer of Marlborough, and the glories of Malaga as equal or superior to those of Blenheim. When the exact story of the battle became known, a reaction set in, and Malaga was depreciated, even below what was just. And the Whigs were indignant. The Marlborough faction was then all-powerful and refused to tolerate a man whom his friends had evened to their chief. Rooke was dismissed from his command and put upon the shelf, never to be employed again. He lived for only four years longer, and died in 1708.

Rooke was probably the greatest seaman of his age, in any country; but it is difficult to say by what standard his abilities ought to be finally gauged, and what was the calibre of his contemporaries—friends or enemies. It is not fair to judge any admiral or general by the standard of a later age, or to accuse him of ignorance or stupidity for not practising tactical methods which were not devised till seventy or eighty years after his death. The engaging in parallel lines was and continued to represent the high-water mark of naval tactics, till it was submerged by the practice of Hawke and the theory of Rodney. And in considering how little Rooke was able actually to accomplish, it should be remembered that he was everywhere tied, by the requirements of the service, to a divided

command. From the beginning at Londonderry to the end at Malaga, he never was independent. The instruction to hold frequent councils of war might have been got over, as other admirals got over it; but to confer with his Dutch colleagues was a diplomatic necessity, the imperfect appreciation of which had much to do with the disaster of Beachy Head. And between consulting one and consulting a dozen, he may well have thought the difference not worth making a row about.

William III—who was not a bad judge of his fellow creatures—had certainly a high opinion of Rooke; he knew, at least, that he was honest—honest according to a higher standard than that of the age in which he lived. Though a public servant, he did not intrigue with foreign princes against the king and constitution of England; and though holding high office he did not amass a fortune; but he was able to say on his death-bed—"I do not leave much, but what I leave was honestly gotten. It never cost a sailor a tear, or the nation a farthing."

ANSON



ANSON.

V

LORD ANSON

ALTHOUGH the name of Anson is well known as that of a skilful navigator and of a man who made a remarkable voyage round the world in the eighteenth century, in its wider sense it is perhaps not so familiar as it should be; for it is the name of one who was not only a practised sailor, but also a gallant officer and an able administrator during some of the most brilliant years in the history of our navy. The story of Anson's career is one of steady and continual success. From the day of his entering the service, his conduct seconded his family interest; the promotions and honours which were heaped on him appeared to be awarded to merit solely, and wealth followed in their train. At the time of his death, though not an old man, he was admiral of the fleet, a peer of the realm, a privy councillor, one of the richest men in the kingdom, and for many years he had administered the affairs of the navy and had "organized victory" as first lord of the admiralty. It was not his fortune to command in great and important actions, on which, perhaps, the fate of countries depended; but what fighting he had to do, he did in a masterly manner; and he not only proved himself to be a good tactician, but also to

be gifted with sound judgment, prudence, promptitude, and dash. His remarkable voyage round the world, the story of which reads more like a stirring romance than the common-place narrative of a naval expedition, proved him to be a man of dogged perseverance, of great energy and indomitable pluck; while in nearly twenty years at the admiralty, during the whole time he was a flag-officer, he showed himself to be not only an able administrator, but a statesman gifted with extraordinary powers of prescience.

George Anson was born at Shugborough, in the parish of Colwich, Staffordshire, on St. George's Day, the 23rd April, 1697. He was the second son of William Anson of Shugborough, by Isabella, daughter of Charles Carrier of Wirksworth in Derbyshire, and sister of Janet, the wife of Thomas Parker, afterwards Lord Parker, who, in 1718, became Lord Chancellor, and in 1721 was created Earl of Macclesfield. Of his early life there is but little record. He entered the navy in 1712, as a volunteer on board the Ruby, commanded by Captain Peter Chamberlen,[1] whom he followed to the Monmouth, which was paid off in June 1713. His service during the next three years cannot now be traced. Volunteers, or midshipmen, or even master's mates, were not then in any way permanently attached to the navy. They were entered on board a ship for the commission, in the same way as the seamen; and in the same way were discharged to the shore when the ship was paid off. Their rating depended entirely on the favour or caprice of the captain; and the rating which they had in their next ship was, as before, a purely personal matter. There can be no doubt that George Anson continued

[1] [A first cousin of the better-known Sir Hovenden Walker.]

serving at sea, but nothing is certainly known of him till the 17th May, 1716, when he was promoted by Sir John Norris to be second lieutenant of the Hampshire, one of a powerful squadron sent to the Baltic, to co-operate with the Russians and Danes against the Swedes, and at once protect the trade and induce the King of Sweden to cede Bremen to the Elector of Hanover. The combined fleet was nominally under the command of the tsar in person, with Norris as his vice-admiral; but the Swedes remained in harbour, and the demonstration, though politically important, did not include any brilliant achievement. It was renewed in the summer of 1717, under Sir George Byng; and in December the Hampshire was paid off.

Anson's stay on shore, however, was but short. In March 1718 he was appointed second lieutenant of the Montagu, a 60-gun ship, commanded by Captain Thomas Beverley, and was in her in Sir George Byng's action off Cape Passaro, on the 31st July, when—at the age of twenty-one—he received his "baptism of fire."

The battle is noteworthy, as one of the very few in which decisive results were obtained without any great superiority of force. Byng's fleet of twenty-one ships of the line was indeed superior to the Spanish, of eighteen, both in number of ships and in weight of metal; but the superiority was not, in itself, so great as to account for the completeness of the victory. This was due to Byng's promptness in seizing the opportunity, but still more to the irresolution and uncertainty of the Spanish admiral, Don Antonio de Castañeta. He could not make up his mind whether to fight or to fly; and his fleet, withdrawing leisurely and in a straggling line, before the wind, was

followed, overtaken, and overwhelmed piecemeal, and so easily, that Corbett, Byng's secretary and the historian of the expedition, could write, "the English might be rather said to have made a seizure than to have gotten a victory." The Montagu's share in what fighting there was, is a not inapt illustration of the whole. She and the Rupert, also a 60-gun ship, came up with and captured the Volante of 44 guns; and Castañeta's tactics—if they can be called so—permitted a similar disproportion to be the rule throughout. Castañeta's flag-ship, the Real Felipe herself, of 74 guns, was taken by the combined force of two 70-gun ships; and the 70-gun ship, Principe de Asturias, carrying the flag of the second in command, yielded to the united effort of three ships of 70 guns.

And thus, though eleven out of the eighteen Spanish ships of the line were taken or destroyed, it gave young Anson little experience of hard fighting. What it did give him was an object-lesson as to what a capable commander could do with an unwilling or undecided enemy. Strange that two men—nay rather, three; Mathews, Lestock, and Byng—who took part in it, showed in after years that it had conveyed no lesson to them.

In October 1719 Anson was transferred to the Barfleur carrying the flag of Sir George Byng, in which ship he remained until promoted to the rank of commander, in June 1722, and appointed to the Weasel sloop, at that time employed in the protection of the fisheries and the suppression of smuggling in the North Sea. This, however, was but for a short time. In February 1724 he was advanced to post rank, and appointed to command the Scarborough frigate.

His rapid promotion—for he was not quite twenty-seven, and had been but twelve years at sea when he attained his captain's commission—has been ascribed to his close relationship to Lord Macclesfield; and this is possibly true; but it is only fair to assume that it was due also in great measure to his own conduct, and to the zeal and aptitude which he had displayed as a young officer; merits which had undoubtedly gained for him the esteem and approval of his superiors.

As soon as the Scarborough was ready for sea, she was sent out to the coast of South Carolina, to protect our commerce against the depredations of pirates from the Bahamas, or the almost equally piratical *guarda-costas* from the Havana. The station and Anson seem to have mutually suited each other. What work there was to do was effectively done; but both pirates and raiders were restrained in their covetous desires by the mere knowledge that ships of war were on the station; and though these occasionally made the round of the Bahamas, they had, on the whole, a pleasant time of it at Charlestown and other ports on the coast. Of Anson, Mrs. Hutchinson, a South Carolina lady, in a letter[1] to her sister in London, wrote—

"He has good sense, good nature, is polite and well-bred; free from that troublesome ceremoniousness which often renders many people extremely disagreeable. He is generous without profusion, elegant without ostentation, and, above all, of a most tender, humane disposition. At balls, plays, concerts, etc., I have often the pleasure of seeing, and sometimes of conversing with Mr. Anson, who, I assure you,

[1] Quoted by Sir John Barrow in his *Life of Lord Anson*.

is far from being an anchorite, though not what we call a modern pretty fellow, because he is really so old-fashioned as to make some profession of religion; moreover, he never dances, nor swears, nor talks nonsense. As he greatly admires a fine woman, so he is passionately fond of music. . . . But I would convince you that all I have said of Mr. Anson is not merely panegyrical. I will give you an account of his faults as well as of his virtues; for I have nowhere said he is an angel. It is averred that he loves his bottle and his friend so well that he will not be very soon tired of their company, especially when they happen to be perfectly to his taste, which is pretty nice as to both; and if fame says true, he is very far from being a woman hater."

In July 1728 Morris, the captain of the Garland, a frigate of the same force as the Scarborough, died; and as the Scarborough was badly in want of repair, Anson, who was now senior, if not sole captain on the station, ordered her home, moving himself into the Garland, in which he remained out for another two years. He was recalled in July 1730, and was appointed to the Diamond, a 40-gun frigate, attached to the fleet which, in 1731, went out to the Mediterranean under the command of Sir Charles Wager, with the special object of escorting the Spaniards to Leghorn, in accordance with the terms of the treaty of Vienna. It was a splendid function, gaudy with bunting and noisy with salutes, though somewhat of a failure, when considered as the seal and token of the pacification of Europe. But such seals of pacification generally have been failures.

In the end of the year the Diamond was paid off and Anson was appointed to the Squirrel, another 20-gun ship,

and again for service on the South Carolina station, where he remained till June 1735; after which he was on half-pay for two years and a half, practically his first holiday since he had joined the navy. It is, however, worth remarking that during this time, since his promotion to commander's rank in 1722, with the exception of the one year with Wager in the Mediterranean, he had been almost entirely shut off from naval society and naval associations. The lonely cabin of a 20-gun frigate on a remote station may have been a very good place for the study of history, geography, or the theory of navigation, but was not so well-adapted for lessons in naval tactics, strategy, or administration; and however pleasant the balls and concerts, the bottles and fine women of Charlestown, it is difficult to understand how they were training George Anson for the very severe work which lay before him, and on which he entered in December 1737, when he commissioned the 60-gun ship Centurion, and sailed for the west coast of Africa, with instructions to protect our trade, to visit the several forts and trading posts, and then to cross over to Barbados, where further orders would be awaiting him. He did not reach Barbados till the autumn of 1739, when war with Spain was imminent, and he received orders to return at once to England. He arrived at Spithead on the 10th November. War had been declared on the 19th October.

The origin of the quarrel necessarily suggested that active hostilities should begin with an attack on the Spanish settlements in the West Indies, and be followed up by attacks on those in other quarters; on the west coast of South America or of Mexico, and in the western

Pacific. Some months before the declaration of war, Vernon had been sent out to the West Indies, where, on the 21st November, "he took Porto Bello with six ships." The news of this did not reach England till the following March, but it had been already decided to send out a squadron under the command of Anson, as commodore, to destroy or harass the Spanish ports and shipping on the west coast of America, and to join hands with Vernon across the Isthmus of Panama, and so complete the reduction of Central America. At the same time, another squadron, commanded by Captain James Cornewall, was to go eastward, round the Cape of Good Hope, and reduce the Philippine Islands and the other Spanish possessions in those seas.

The course of events in the West Indies, and the gush of public sentiment in favour of Vernon, profoundly modified this design. It was determined to send out a large fleet and a considerable army to reinforce Vernon; and to this, every other object had to give way. The idea of sending a squadron to the Western Pacific was relinquished, and the expedition under Anson was ordered on a much smaller scale than had been intended. The demands of the West Indian fleet exhausted the dockyards of stores and the ports of seamen; of soldiers there were none, even those sent to Vernon being raw recruits. The equipment of Anson's squadron was thus very seriously delayed, and though he received his commission on the 10th January, 1740, and his instructions were dated the 31st January, they were not officially delivered to him till the 28th June. The squadron, as finally determined on, was thus composed—

Centurion	60 guns	400 men[1]	Commodore George Anson.
Gloucester	50 „	300 „	Captain Richard Norris.
Severn	50 „	300 „	„ Hon. Ed. Legge.
Pearl	40 „	250 „	„ Mat. Michell.
Wager	28 „	160 „	„ Dandy Kidd.
Trial	8 „	100 „	„ Hon. Geo. Murray.

And two victuallers.

But even when the commodore had his instructions, and the composition of the squadron was settled, much remained to be done. The ships were not manned; seamen could not be got; and of the 500 soldiers who were to form part of the expedition, none had been raised. Anson went down to Portsmouth with instructions to Sir John Norris, then commander-in-chief there, to supply him with 300 seamen, the number he required. But Norris, an old and obstinate man, positively refused to weaken the crews of the ships under his orders to such an extent, and would only provide 170, of whom 32 were discharged from hospital in order to make up the number. And with this Anson had to be satisfied.

Then again, instead of getting a regiment of soldiers, as originally arranged, to act as land forces when required, Anson was informed, almost at the last moment, that all the troops that could be spared to accompany his expedition were 500 Chelsea pensioners, men who had been invalided out of the army, and were in receipt of out-pensions from Chelsea Hospital. The service on which the expedition was to be engaged was acknowledged to be one in

[1] [These numbers are 'the establishment,' or number of men ordered to be borne by ships of the different classes. It will be seen (*post*, p. 174) that on leaving England the Centurion had 506 men actually on board, and the Gloucester, 374. The Trial, on the other hand, had only 81.]

which hardships and privations of no ordinary nature would have to be endured; yet in view of all this, it was decided by the military authorities to send these poor invalids—of whom many had been crippled in the service of their country, and the majority had constitutions undermined by long service in unhealthy and pestilential climates—on a long sea voyage, and a passage round Cape Horn into what was then an almost unknown sea.

Anson was very indignant at these men being foisted on him, and protested strongly against their being embarked, knowing that their helplessness would seriously hamper the expedition, even if it did not prove altogether fatal to its success. Sir Charles Wager, then first lord of the admiralty, forwarded and supported his remonstrances, but was curtly informed that those responsible for their selection—presumably the military authorities—were better judges of soldiers than either he or Mr. Anson, and that the men were considered the fittest that could be employed on the proposed service. The men themselves did not think so. Those of them that had the use of their legs ran away before they could be sent on board; and it may be mentioned, in anticipation, that not one of these poor wretches, thus embarked, survived the terrible hardships of the voyage. They all perished miserably from scurvy and privation, and most of them, before the ships reached Juan Fernandez. To supply the deficiencies, 210 raw and undisciplined recruits were drafted into the squadron from different regiments; and with this somewhat scratch lot Anson was forced to be content.

It was not until the 18th September that he succeeded in getting away from England with his squadron, and

starting on the voyage which vexatious delays had so long hindered. The general tenor of his instructions was to capture, sink, burn, or otherwise destroy any ships under the Spanish flag, that he might fall in with, and to harass and annoy the Spaniards generally, by seizing and capturing any of their towns or other possessions. There was a special clause permitting him to look out for and, if possible, capture the Spanish galleon which sailed annually from Acapulco to Manila with a rich and valuable cargo ; and permission was also accorded him to return by way of China, or back round Cape Horn, as he should judge best. His orders were, necessarily, so worded as to leave much to his own discretion, more particularly with regard to the places he was to visit, and the period of his absence from England.

After a passage of forty days he arrived at Madeira, where he remained for a week, and sailed again on the 3rd November. Shortly afterwards, the first symptoms of scurvy appeared; that dreadful disease which was to play such an important part in the enterprise, with a persistence and fatal effect, to which there are few parallels in the annals of navigation. Bad weather, wet decks, crowded, ill-ventilated sleeping accommodation, clothing ill-adapted to the frequent climatic changes, innutritious and insufficient food, were all predisposing causes towards the promotion and development of one of the most terrible diseases which sailors can be afflicted with ; and though everything that suggested itself to the naval and medical authorities of the ships was done to stay its ravages, or to lessen the sufferings of the men, it was unavailing.

After a brief stay at the island of St. Catharine, on the

coast of Brazil, and at Port St. Julian, they entered Le Maire Strait on the 7th March, 1741, with a fair wind and favourable weather; but they had scarcely passed through it, when they were assailed by furious gales of wind, in which the ships were scattered, never to meet again. The Severn and the Pearl, beaten back to the eastward, and unable—with their men sick and dying—to get round Cape Horn, returned to Rio Janeiro and England. The Wager was lost on the iron-bound coast of Tierra del Fuego; and though her men escaped to land, they suffered extreme hardships before they reached the Spanish settlements and were permitted to return to England; as was related by one of her midshipmen, the Hon. John Byron (afterwards an admiral), in what his grandson, the poet, called "my granddad's narrative."

But for those ships that succeeded in getting round Cape Horn, the passage was terrible. The weather was persistently bad, the wind foul, and the scurvy raged with almost unexampled virulence. On board the Centurion, forty-three men died in April; in May nearly twice as many; and almost every one on board was in some degree affected by the disease. It is impossible to realize the anxiety that must have been felt by the commodore. A man of less unyielding material would probably have abandoned the enterprise altogether; nor, with his ships scattered and half the crew of his own ship dead, could he have been blamed for doing so. Such a course, however, does not seem to have occurred to Anson. With his rigid ideas of discipline, with his scrupulous adherence to orders, and considering also that his own reputation was at stake, he steadily and persistently held on his way, hoping to find

the other ships waiting to meet him at the appointed rendezvous off the island of Socoro.

Here the Centurion arrived on the 8th May, and here she cruised for a fortnight, in the hope of picking up some of the missing ships. As none appeared, Anson proceeded to the second rendezvous, the island of Juan Fernandez; but through an unfortunate error in navigation, or rather by an uncertainty of their longitude, they missed the island and lost no less than twelve days in endeavouring to find it. The consequences of this blunder were terrible; for during this time they buried between seventy and eighty men whose lives might, in all probability, have been saved had they succeeded in reaching their anchorage at the earlier date. They anchored at Juan Fernandez on the 9th June.

At this time only a little over 200 men remained alive on board the Centurion, out of more than 500 (including the invalids and soldiers) that left England in her only nine months before; and the majority of the survivors were incapacitated by disease and debility from doing any work, even of the lightest nature. On the same day that the Centurion cast anchor off Juan Fernandez, another of the squadron, the Trial, made her appearance. Out of her small complement of 81 men, she had buried no less than 34, and the remainder were so afflicted with scurvy that only the captain, one lieutenant and three men, were able to perform any duty connected with the working of the ship.

Steps were at once taken to remove the sick of both ships to the shore, where tents were erected for their reception; but during their removal more than a dozen

poor fellows died from exhaustion and exposure to the air. Notwithstanding abundance of fresh provisions, for the sea was teeming with fish, the valleys with fruit and vegetables, and the hills abounded with wild goats; in spite also of the rest and quiet on shore, more than three weeks elapsed before the mortality ceased. During the first ten days of their occupation of the island, they rarely buried less than six daily.

On the 21st June a sail was descried from the look-out on the top of the hill, which proved to be the Gloucester; but to such a pitiable and helpless condition had her crew been reduced, that more than a month elapsed before she could be brought into the anchorage. The state of this ship was even more deplorable than that of the two others. She had lost more than two-thirds of her crew, and those that remained alive were so feeble as to be utterly incapable of work. The ordinary duties of working the ship thus devolved entirely on the officers and servants, who, presumably from having in some respects better food, superior accommodation on board, and more active minds, did not suffer in the same proportion as the remainder of the crew.

By the beginning of September all symptoms of the disease which had so virulently attacked them were apparently eradicated, and the ships were ready to make a move. But the death-roll was a terrible one. The Centurion lost 292 men, and had only 214 left. The Gloucester had fared still worse; out of a smaller complement, she had buried the same number of men as the Centurion, and had only 82 remaining alive. The loss on board the Trial was on much the same lines. And to sum up; out of the 961 men who

left England in these three ships, 626 had died within twelve months.

The question which Anson had now to decide was a momentous one; for what could he hope to accomplish with the weakened and reduced force at his disposal? With only three ships, most inadequately manned, his original intention to attack the larger Spanish settlements —such as Callao, Lima, and Panama—appeared out of the question; even the Acapulco ship, if met, might prove too formidable an antagonist. It was not in his nature to return to England and report a failure; and after consulting with the other captains, it was decided that the ships should, for a while, cruise separately off the coast of South America, so as to pick up the Spanish merchant vessels sailing from Callao to Valparaiso.

In September they left Juan Fernandez. The Gloucester was sent to the northward: the Centurion, with the Trial, went off Valparaiso, where she made several prizes. The Trial was, however, found to be not seaworthy, and was consequently scuttled and sunk. One of the prizes, under the name of Trial's Prize, took her place; others of the prizes kept company with their captors, and the coast was kept in a state of alarm by the appearance of an English squadron of some six ships, which, in reality, were manned by a collective force of 250 men.

In the beginning of November they went north to join the Gloucester, and on the 10th, being off Paita, Anson sent in a strong party under the command of Mr. Brett, then second lieutenant of the Centurion, which took possession of the town, sacked it and finally set it on fire, as the governor, who had fled on the first alarm, refused to treat

for its ransom. The booty actually brought off amounted to something more than £30,000; but the loss to Spain by the destruction of the rich merchandise stored in the place was estimated at not less than £300,000.

Two days after leaving the ashes of Paita they fell in with the Gloucester, which also had made some rich prizes, and together they went north by easy stages to the coast of Mexico, intending to look out for the Manila galleon on her way to Acapulco. They were, however, too late; the galleon had got into Acapulco a month before; but as it had been given out that the return galleon, from Acapulco to Manila, would sail on the 3rd March, 1742, only a fortnight later, they cruised in the expected track for some weeks, till, by the beginning of April, being short of water, they withdrew to Chequetan, believing, as was indeed the case, that their presence on the coast was known, and the sailing of the galleon for that year put off in consequence.

Whilst refitting and watering at Chequetan, Anson made up his mind—if nothing further was heard of the galleon's sailing—to cross the Pacific to China; and in preparation for this voyage, on account of the very small number of men at his disposal, he burnt the prizes which had kept up the hollow appearance of a powerful squadron. The men, with some negroes and Indians, but, all told, fewer than the full complement of the Centurion, were divided between her and the Gloucester. Finally, after picking up their boat which had been keeping a constant look-out off Acapulco, and landing all the Spanish prisoners, they lost sight of the coast of Mexico on the 6th May.

The voyage was a terrible one. Through ignorance of the limits of the trade winds of the Pacific, the ships were

kept on a course along the 13th parallel of north latitude, which in the summer months is to the southward of the north-east trade. The wind was thus uncertain; the weather unsettled; the passage extremely long; and as the scurvy again broke out with as great virulence as before, and men were being buried at the rate of eight, ten, or twelve a day, it appeared probable that the ships would be left without seamen to work them, or officers to navigate them. In a violent storm the Gloucester was dismasted; and under jury-masts she sailed so badly that she threatened to make the long passage still longer. She was also reported to be leaking badly; and her feeble crew was exhausted by continual pumping. So on the 15th August she was abandoned and set on fire. The next morning she blew up. Ten days later the Centurion reached the island of Tinian, one of the Ladrones, and anchored there on the evening of the 28th, reduced to such a state of physical weakness that her men were five hours in furling sails.

At Tinian, however, they speedily recovered, and though twenty-one died on the first two days, in the following two months the number of deaths did not exceed ten. They left Tinian on the 21st October; and on the 12th November, without further incident worthy of special notice, they reached Macao. Here the ship underwent a very necessary refit; her stores and provisions were replenished, and twenty-three men—some of them Dutch, but mostly Lascars—were added to her crew.

On the 19th April Anson sailed from Macao; and, still intent on carrying out as much of his instructions as possible, he shaped a course so as to endeavour to intercept the Spanish galleon on her way from Acapulco to Manila.

But his force for such an attempt was very small. The number of people on board the Centurion, all told, officers, seamen and boys, negroes, Indians and Lascars, was 227. To make amends for this numerical weakness, the men were daily exercised at the great guns and small arms, and in firing at a mark, so that in a very short time many of them became excellent shots. For the rest, the commodore's plans were so well judged that on the 20th June—two months after leaving Macao—they came in sight of a large ship, which, as she drew near, hoisted Spanish colours, with the standard of Spain at the main top-gallant masthead. There was no apparent desire on her part to avoid a contest; for though the Centurion hoisted her colours and the commodore's broad pennant, the galleon ran down to meet her, trusting apparently in her great size and the number of men she had on board. But these men were not trained to arms; the ship was not efficiently armed; and what guns she had were blocked up by the merchandise which lumbered her decks. The battle was thus not a moment in doubt; and after sustaining the Centurion's deadly fire for an hour and a half, and having lost 67 men killed, and 84 wounded, the galleon struck her flag and surrendered. The Centurion lost two men killed and 17 wounded.

The prize, which proved to be worth somewhat more than £300,000, was taken to Macao and there sold; and Anson, having by firmness and tact overcome all the difficulties which the Chinese put in his way, and having completed his stores and provisions, sailed on his homeward voyage on the 15th December, 1743.

On the 15th June, 1744, the Centurion anchored at Spithead, after an absence from England of nearly four years,

during which time she had circumnavigated the world, and her crew had passed through more terrible vicissitudes, and had endured more hardships, privations, and sufferings, than fall to the lot of ordinary mortals. In spite of the losses, both in ships and men, the expedition must be regarded as, in great measure, a successful one; and this success must be attributed entirely to the unflagging energy, fertility of resource, temper, tact, and skill of Anson. The result was to cripple the power of the Spaniards in the Pacific for the time being; to excite their apprehension for the safety of their South American possessions; and to deprive them of a large amount of treasure, taken and destroyed, estimated at considerably more than a million sterling.

It might have been supposed that after such a long, eventful, and dangerous voyage, Anson and his brave companions would have been cordially welcomed on their return to England. The authorities at Whitehall, however, thought differently; and though they promoted the commodore to be rear-admiral of the blue, and Peircy Brett, the first lieutenant of the Centurion, to be captain, they refused to confirm a commission as captain which Anson had given to Brett nearly a year before. In this they were technically in the right, for the promotion had not been to a vacancy, but merely to command the Centurion under the commodore, who was, by his own commission, distinctly barred from having a captain under him. Unquestionably Anson had exceeded his powers; and though, under the circumstances, it would have been graceful to have allowed the irregularity and confirmed the commission, Lord Winchilsea, then first lord of the admiralty, and his colleagues

refused to do so. Anson on this, sent back his own commission as rear-admiral of the blue, which, he wrote, he must beg leave to decline. The commission was accordingly cancelled; it would perhaps be more correct to say that it was held in abeyance, for no rear-admiral of the blue was appointed in his stead; and at the next promotion of admirals, on the 23rd April, 1745, Anson was promoted to be rear-admiral of the white. But this was by a new admiralty. In December 1744 there had been a remodelling of the ministry; the Duke of Bedford had become first lord of the admiralty, and had appointed Anson to a seat at the board. The next day, Brett's commission as captain was confirmed to its original date.

Anson took office at a time when the affairs of the country, in their relation to other European powers, were in a very unsatisfactory condition; when it was essential that strong hands should be at the helm of the State, and more especially of the department of naval administration. During the past twelve months, the action of our navy had been far from brilliant. France, after assisting Spain in an underhand manner for three years, had at last determined on open hostilities. Her fleet, joined with that of Spain, had come out of Toulon, had fought the action of the 11th February, 1744, and had not been defeated. Another French fleet, intended to support the invasion of England by a French army assembled at Dunkirk, had come up the Channel as high as Dungeness, on the 24th February, and had not been crushed. War had been declared by France on the 20th March, and by England on the 31st, but nothing had been done which showed the ministry, or the admiralty, to be on a level with the emergency.

The new admiralty scarcely promised to be better than the old. Though a man of some ability, the Duke of Bedford was neither then, nor afterwards, known as anything better than a party politician; and Lord Sandwich, who was second in the patent, was still very young, and without either knowledge or experience. Lord Archibald Hamilton and Lord Vere Beauclerk, the two other naval members of the board, were nonentities; the one saving point was that both Bedford and Sandwich were content to leave their share of the work very much in Anson's hands; and when they were away, as they often were, from ill-health or engagements, they practically, and much to Lord Vere's annoyance, deputed their authority to Anson, who also had a seat in the House of Commons, as member for Heyden in Yorkshire. In 1746 he became a vice-admiral.

It was in a great measure due to Anson, while a member of the board of admiralty, that important steps were taken to improve the construction of our men-of-war, and more especially, to build vessels in classes, so that the stores and fittings of each ship in the same class should be interchangeable, by which system a great saving in expense and convenience would be gained. More attention was also devoted to the seaworthiness and sailing capabilities of our ships; matters which, although of vital importance, had been almost entirely neglected.

A scheme was also elaborated for the promotion and subsequent retirement of flag-officers. Hitherto admirals had been promoted from the captains' list by selection, and though those who were passed over were understood to be shelved, they still remained on the list, receiving only a captain's half-pay. This was felt to be a hardship,

and a superannuation scheme was introduced, by which those captains who were passed over were—under certain conditions of service—promoted to be rear-admirals on a retired list. In the official language of the day they were promoted to be rear-admirals in the fleet—not of the blue, or white, or red squadron; but colloquially, they were spoken of as "of the yellow squadron," and captains retired in this way were said to be "yellowed." There is every reason to believe that it was Anson who brought the idea forward, who worked out its details, and, by his influence with the Duke of Bedford, obtained the Order in Council which approved it. It was at this time, too, that regulations were issued establishing a uniform to be worn by naval officers, though at first it was, in great measure, confined to flag-officers and captains. The coats were of blue cloth, with white cuffs and collars; a dress chosen, it was said, by the king from a riding-habit worn by the Duchess of Bedford. This, however, is extremely doubtful.[1]

Anson, however, was not wholly occupied with office work, with reforms in dress, and the construction of ships, important and valuable as those duties were. Though, practically, at the head of the naval administration, in the absence of the Duke of Bedford and Lord Sandwich, he

[1] [The story is unsupported by any satisfactory evidence. On the other hand, it is certain that Captain Philip Saumarez had devised a uniform coat, at least as early as August 1747 (Barrow's *Life of Anson*, p. 151); that this uniform coat was exactly that which was ordered in 1748 (portrait of Saumarez, now in the possession of Lord de Saumarez), and that Saumarez was killed on 14th October, 1747. The necessary inference is that if the Duchess of Bedford had such a habit in 1748, it was copied from the coat: the coat could not be copied from it. But it is quite possible that the Duchess' wearing it won for it the king's favour.]

hoisted his flag in August 1746, as commander-in-chief of the "Western squadron,"—as what we now know as the "Channel fleet" was then called—and for several weeks cruised off Ushant, in the hopes of intercepting the French squadron homeward bound from the coast of Nova Scotia. This, however, escaped him by keeping further to the south; and Anson, learning that it had got into Brest, returned to Portsmouth and to the admiralty.

The next spring he again hoisted his flag, and on the 9th April, 1747, sailed from Plymouth to look out for two French squadrons about to sail for the purpose of reinforcing the fleets in North America and in the East Indies, keeping company for mutual support as far as Cape St. Vincent, whence they were to proceed to their respective destinations. To intercept these ships, and so frustrate the objects they had in view, was considered a matter of very great importance; and Anson, arranging his plans with skill and judgment, had the satisfaction of falling in with the combined squadrons off Cape Finisterre on the 3rd May. Immediately he made sail towards them.

At half-past one in the afternoon he made the signal for his fleet to form in line of battle ahead; but, later on, realizing the inferiority of the enemy, and seeing that their sole object was to effect their escape under cover of night, he threw out the signal for a general chase, and to attack the enemy without any regard to battle formation. This he was perfectly justified in doing, considering his own preponderance of force. The result showed the correctness of his judgment; by seven p.m. every ship of the enemy, with both the admirals, had surrendered to Anson's squadron. The ships he had at the outset detached in

pursuit of the enemy's convoy, also carried out his orders most zealously, and made several valuable prizes.

To the French, it was a crushing and decisive defeat, and it reflected great credit on Anson for the masterly way in which it had been achieved. The value of the treasure obtained was very great. It is reported that no less than twenty large wagons were required to convey it from Portsmouth to London, where it was escorted to the Bank in a grand procession, amid the enthusiastic acclamations of an enormous concourse of people. Many of the houses along the route were illuminated, and numerous bonfires were lighted.

Although Anson's success cannot be regarded as a great and brilliant victory, it was, at any rate, an event of the highest importance. It was not only a serious reverse to the enemy, but it was also the complete discomfiture of two separate expeditions that had been specially organized with the object of crippling our naval power in two different parts of the world; and, after the many recent events which had not added fresh fame or renown to our arms at sea, it was received with a burst of enthusiasm by the whole nation, greater than, of itself, and without considering the circumstances of the day, it would seem to have deserved.

On Anson's arrival in England, he was most warmly and cordially received by the king, and on the 13th June he was raised to the peerage by the title of Lord Anson, Baron of Soberton in the county of Southampton. His second in command, Rear-Admiral Peter Warren, was, at the same time, made a Knight of the Bath.

In February 1748 the Duke of Bedford became one of

the secretaries of state, and Lord Sandwich succeeded him as first lord of the admiralty; but being appointed plenipotentiary for the negotiations at Aix-la-Chapelle, he virtually deputed Anson to act in his place at the admiralty, putting on one side Lord Vere Beauclerk, who, as in the former patent, was named before Anson. But Lord Vere strongly objected to be thus put on one side, and Anson wrote to Sandwich, to the effect that it would be disagreeable to him to act under Lord Vere; to which Sandwich, then at the Hague, replied—

"I have very little time to write by this post, but I would not lose a moment to desire that you would consider yourself as in effect at the head of the admiralty; that you would not only write to me your sentiments as to any measures you would wish to have executed, but that you would also make use of my name whenever it may be necessary."

And a few days later—

"I am sorry Lord Vere remains at the board, if that is any way disagreeable to you; but I think that so far from his being able to make a cipher of you, that you must put him absolutely in that situation himself. I always told you that, whenever I got to the head of the admiralty, it should, except in the name and show of it, be the same thing as if you were there yourself; and I beg you to consider my being there simply as an addition to your power. I have told the Duke of Newcastle that, in admiralty business, he must consider you as one and the same thing with me, and that I intend to depend entirely upon you, and to throw the direction of the whole as much as possible into your hands. . . You may be assured I will do no act whatever but

directly through your hands, which will plainly show people where the power centres."

It was at this time, the 25th April, 1748, that Anson married Elizabeth, daughter of the Earl of Hardwicke, at that time Lord Chancellor, between whom and the Earl of Macclesfield there had been a very close friendship. The Centurion's voyage and the command in the Channel in 1747 had both been extremely lucrative, and—as fortunes were counted in those days—Anson was a very rich man. The marriage was in every way suitable; and though it was probably, in the first instance, a sort of "family compact," it appears to have been also one of sincere affection.

The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed on the 18th October, 1748, and Anson was enabled to turn his attention more exclusively to reforms in the administration and organization of the navy. Among minor matters, he succeeded in getting the relative ranks of the officers in the navy and army established by Order in Council. Of greater importance was the instituting annual visits of inspection to the several dockyards, in which—as Anson well knew—jobbery, peculation, and malversation were almost recognized as vested interests. The official tour of the lords of the admiralty did something towards remedying the evil; and though, for sixty years longer, the dockyards continued to be sinks of iniquity, they were perhaps never quite so bad as they had been during the War of the Austrian Succession.

The war, which had brought to light the iniquities in the dockyards, had also shown many weak places in the discipline and organization of the fleets at sea, and thus gave rise to the celebrated Act of Parliament so long known as

the Articles of War,[1] which, passed in 1749, remained in force—with a few slight alterations—for more than a hundred years.

Another measure of Anson's, which followed a few years later, was the establishment on a permanent footing of the corps of marines—soldiers borne for sea service, as part of the naval establishment, under the control of the admiralty alone, entirely distinct from the army. Several attempts had previously been made to establish a corps of marines, but they had all ended unsatisfactorily, because this distinction had not been made; and though entered or enlisted for service at sea, both officers and men affected to consider themselves as primarily belonging to the army and independent of naval discipline. The corps established by Anson in 1755 has continued to the present time, sharing honourably in the achievements and the glories of the naval service.

In June 1751, consequent on the summary dismissal of Sandwich from the post of first lord of the admiralty Anson was nominated as his successor. No doubt Anson's personal and family interest, supplemented by the influence of Lord Hardwicke, was very strong; but no wiser appointment could have been made; for there was no one with a more valuable or more widely extended experience of naval affairs than Anson, who had been virtually at the head of the admiralty for six consecutive years. He was regarded as a clear-headed, shrewd man, possessing sound commonsense, good judgment, and an unequalled knowledge of the

[1] "The Act for amending, explaining and reducing into one Act of Parliament the Laws relating to the Government of his Majesty's Ships, Vessels, and Forces at Sea."

capabilities and merits of the senior officers of the navy; and four years later, when war with France again broke out, it was due to his exertions that England entered on the struggle better prepared to meet her enemies at sea, than on any previous occasion.

From the first commencement of hostilities in the spring of 1755, the government was able to send forth powerful fleets, which dominated the Atlantic and the Bay of Biscay, protected the English trade, secured the Channel Islands, and swept French commerce off the sea. The government was persuaded that the French would accompany, or precede, a declaration of war by an attempt to invade England in force, and was thus impressed with the necessity of keeping the main strength of the navy in western waters. The news of a contemplated expedition against Minorca was, however, too persistent to be altogether neglected; and though it was only half believed, a strong squadron was, early in 1756, sent to the Mediterranean under the command of Admiral Byng, with instructions to support or relieve Minorca, if Minorca should be threatened or attacked; or in the more probable contingency of the Toulon squadron having gone to North America, to despatch a proportionate number of ships after it, under the command of Rear-Admiral West.

Before leaving England, Byng represented that the force which he was taking out was inadequate for the service required of him; but his objections were overruled, and he was assured that when he was joined by the ships already in the Mediterranean, he would have at his disposal a force equal, if not superior to that of the enemy. He also complained that his ships were badly manned and were short of

complement. Ships newly commissioned were then, and throughout the century, almost always badly manned, and those of Byng's squadron were neither worse nor better than usual ; but technically, they were short of complement by the number of marines they should have carried. To make this a grievance, however, might almost be called a quibble. As it was judged possible that it might be necessary to reinforce the garrison of Minorca without a moment's delay, an order was sent down to the fleet to send the marines on shore, and to receive in lieu of them a regiment of soldiers, who could, if requisite, be immediately landed at Minorca. These soldiers were borne in the ships as "supernumeraries ;" but were effectively part of the ships' companies until the time came for them to be landed ; and as the marines were themselves newly raised men, or, at any rate, without sea training, there was in reality no difference in the efficiency of the detachment.

How Byng went out to the Mediterranean, did not defeat the French fleet, did not relieve Minorca, and how he suffered for his neglect, are matters of history with which we are not now concerned. What does concern us is the measure of Anson's responsibility for the disaster. At the time, public indignation was ready to vent itself not only on Byng, but on Anson, and on all the members of the government. Against Anson, in particular, the feeling was very strong ; if Byng was incompetent, Anson had appointed him, and was therefore responsible for Byng's misconduct or short-comings ; if Byng's squadron was—as Byng insisted—insufficient for the work before it, Anson had told off the ships of which it was composed, and was responsible for its weakness.

On the very first news of his failure, Byng was hurriedly recalled by the ministry; but after his arrival in England, public feeling ran so high that the Duke of Newcastle quailed before the popular anger, and resigned. With him Anson also went out of office, and had nothing whatever to do with the conduct of affairs from November 1756 to June 1757, during which time Byng was tried by court-martial, found guilty of criminal neglect, sentenced and executed. There is no reason to doubt that Anson fully agreed with the finding of the court and the justice of the sentence, but his opinion was not expressed either officially or publicly; his judgment in nominating Byng to the command, Byng being, at the time, the senior available admiral, was never questioned except by irresponsible clamour; and no one, in or out of parliament, doubted that the belief in the probability of an attempted invasion fully justified the admiralty and the ministry, in refusing to send out to the Mediterranean a squadron stronger than seemed absolutely necessary. That Byng's squadron was equal to the French was abundantly shown before the court-martial.

When the Newcastle-Pitt administration was formed in June 1757, Anson returned to the admiralty, and for the next five years—as brilliant as any in the history of our navy—was largely responsible for the constitution of our fleets, the organization of expeditions, and the general strategy of the campaigns. With what splendid success these were conducted is related in detail in the following chapters; but to have nominated to high commands men like Hawke, Boscawen, Osborn, Saunders, Rodney, Howe, Keppel, is in itself a distinction and a glory which has fallen to few administrators. Meanwhile, he brought in

and passed through parliament a bill for the more regular and frequent payment of the wages of seamen, enabling them also to remit a portion of their money to their families. This seems, by the common-sense of the thing, and now by the usage of nearly half a century, so much a matter of course, that some effort may be needed to understand the enormous stride towards improving the comfort and well-being of the seamen which was effected by Anson's measure, imperfect and partial though it was.

The only active service which he himself undertook during the war, was the command of the Grand fleet off Brest in the summer of 1758, in order to cover the operations of a small squadron, with an expeditionary landing force, against St. Malo and Cherbourg; and principally, it may be, to soothe the ruffled temper of Sir Edward Hawke, who had conceived that some slight had been offered to him.[1] It is very possible that the personal relations of Anson and Hawke were not those of warm friendship; but each of them was too great a man to permit any private feeling to stand in the way of the public service. For the rest, though Anson took no active command himself, feeling, it may be, that with such subordinates his post of duty was in Whitehall, the enumeration of the results of his ministry forms a glorious roll-call of victory. The reduction of Louisbourg in 1758, not only by the direct action of Boscawen, but by the indirect action of Osborn and Hawke; the destruction of the flat-bottomed boats at Havre, the defeat of De la Clue at Lagos, and of Conflans among the rocks of Quiberon Bay; the reduction of Quebec followed by the conquest of

[1] See *post*, p. 225.

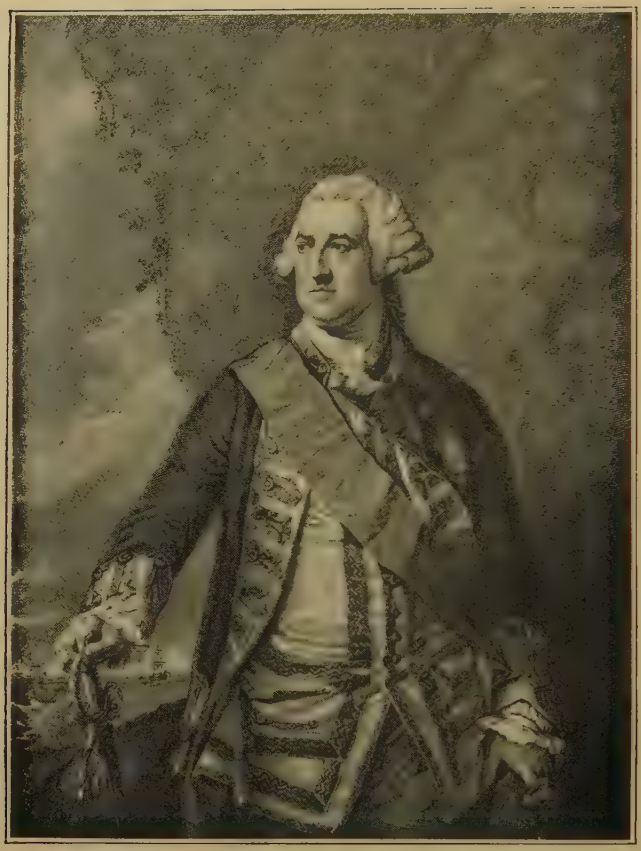
Canada; the capture of Guadeloupe, Martinique, Belle Isle, Havana, and Manila—all glorious for the actual commanders on the field of battle, were almost equally glorious to the minister whose care and prudence and forethought provided the ships, the stores, and the men which rendered the victories possible.

But the end of this Anson was not to see. It is probable that the hardships of his voyage in the Centurion had severely tried his constitution; the change from an active life in the open air, to being shut up in an office for the greater part of each day, may well have tried it in a different direction; and the death, on the 1st June, 1760, of his wife, to whom he was tenderly attached, was a shock from which he never fully recovered. He died almost suddenly, at his seat, Moor Park, near Rickmansworth, on the 6th June, 1762.

Anson's professional reputation rests on a somewhat different basis from that of his more brilliant colleagues. A man of undaunted courage, cool and steady in the presence of danger, of great resolution, of an enterprising spirit, patient under difficulties, and of quick and comprehensive judgment, he won a large share of credit by his voyage round the world, and again by his smart and most timely little action off Cape Finisterre. But the field of his greatest distinction may be considered as the board of admiralty. There he held sway for seventeen years; during which time not only did he provide the weapons which Hawke, Boscawen, and their colleagues so admirably wielded, but he overcame the difficulties which had so long stood in the way of establishing a corps of marines; he amended and tightened up the discipline of the navy and the practice of

courts-martial ; he improved the design and construction of ships, the fitting of the guns—their carriages, breechings and tackles ; he instituted the inspection of dockyards, a superannuation for officers, a system of regular payments for seamen ; and all without noise, without self-advertisement. He was a man of modest, unassuming manners, not brilliant in society, never speaking in parliament, with no talent for conversation or letter writing, and described by Sir Charles Williams as "having been round the world but never in it." It is only by considering the many glories, the many important administrative measures, the numerous minor improvements which were crowded into the relatively short period of his administration, that we are enabled to realize the fact that he was effectively, as well as officially, the trident-bearer during a time of great change and unparalleled splendour.

HAWKE



HAWKE

VI

LORD HAWKE

It would seem more than a little curious that the name of Hawke should be now comparatively unknown to the average Englishman, were it not that even in his lifetime his services were tardily acknowledged and grudgingly rewarded. This may have been partly because he had no great family interest, and still more, perhaps, because, devoted to his profession, he meddled little with politics and not at all with party ; his business, he declared by his actions, was "to keep foreigners from fooling us." Other reasons, of a more personal nature, will manifest themselves in the course of the narrative.

Edward Hawke, the son of a barrister whose family had been settled at Treriven in Cornwall for many generations, was born in London in 1705. On the mother's side he was great-grandson of Sir William Fairfax, of Steeton—cousin of Lord Fairfax, the parliamentary general—and nephew of Lieutenant-Colonel Martin Bladen, who had served with Marlborough in Flanders, and in Spain as *aide-de-camp* to Lord Galway. From 1717 to his death in 1746, Bladen was a commissioner of trade and plantations and a member of parliament, and was thus able in some degree to support

and forward the career of his nephew, whose guardian he became on the death of the boy's father in 1718.

In February 1720 young Hawke entered the navy as a volunteer on board the Seahorse, commanded by Captain Thomas Durell, with whom he continued for five years, on the North American Station and in the West Indies, till, on the return of the Seahorse to England, he passed his examination on the 2nd June, 1725. He was afterwards for a couple of years on the coast of Africa and in the West Indies in the Kinsale; and in April 1729 he was promoted to be third lieutenant of the Portland, in which, in the Leopard and in the Edinburgh, he served in the Channel and in the Mediterranean, till in January 1732 he was appointed to the Scarborough with his old captain, Durell, with whom he again went to the North American Station. In November 1732 he was moved into the Kingston bearing the broad pennant of Sir Chaloner Ogle at Jamaica, and was promoted by him to be commander of the Wolf sloop, and again, in March 1734, to be captain of the Flamborough, in which ship he remained till September 1735, when she was paid off in England and Hawke was placed on half-pay.

All this was peace service and uneventful—if any sea service in those days, with its accompanying accidents and dangers, can be properly so called; but for nearly sixteen years, from the day of his first entry into the navy till, as a post-captain, he paid off the Flamborough, he had been constantly employed at sea, and at the age of thirty had thoroughly learned his profession under such capable officers as Durell and Ogle. He did not again go afloat till the outbreak of the war with Spain in 1739.

The navy of the eighteenth century, and more especially of the first half of the eighteenth century, was, in its daily life and discipline, almost as different from the navy of to-day as it was in the ships, their propulsion and their armament. Allowing for a great deal of exaggeration, we are still compelled by much corroborative evidence to accept the picture of life on board ship, as portrayed by Smollett in *Roderick Random*, as substantially correct. Smollett himself served as junior surgeon's mate on board a ship of the line in the fleet which went out to the West Indies in 1740, and was present at the abortive attempt on Cartagena in 1741. The experiences of his hero are referred to the same date, and are probably, to some extent, autobiographical, or were gathered from the yarns of his messmates. He describes the berth in which he and the other surgeon's mates had to live as "a gloomy mansion" six feet square, enclosed with canvas, "with a board by way of a table." When he saw "the sick berth or hospital," he was much less surprised that people should die on board than that any sick person should recover. Here, he says—

"I saw about fifty miserable distempered wretches, suspended in rows, huddled one on another, and deprived of the light of day as well as of fresh air; breathing nothing but a noisome atmosphere of the morbid streams exhaling from their own diseased bodies, devoured with vermin hatched in the filth that surrounded them, and destitute of every convenience necessary for people in that helpless condition."

The story of Captain Oakum who is enraged at there being sixty-one on the sick list and declares that he will have no sick in his ship, is almost incredible. The tyrant

is represented as ordering all the patients to be brought on deck, and examining them—calling them skulkers and lazy vagabonds. One man "just freed of a fever and so weak that he could scarcely stand," was sentenced to receive a dozen lashes; others were punished in various ways; some died, and the sick list was reduced to less than a dozen. In all this there is possibly a good deal of fiction, but probably some substratum of fact.

The description of a gale which they encountered soon after they put to sea shows an utter lack of discipline and even of seamanship. No doubt, as a landsman, the author exaggerates; but he represents officers and sailors as "running backwards and forwards with distraction in their looks, hallooing to one another, and undetermined what they should attend to first;" masts falling over the side,[1] and so on. This is bad enough; but the victualling appears to have been worse. During the attack on Cartagena the seamen are said to have—

"languished for five weeks on the allowance of a purser's quart per diem of fresh water for each man; their provisions consisted of putrid salt beef, to which the sailors gave the name of Irish horse; salt pork of New England, which though neither fish nor flesh, savoured of both; bread from the same country, every biscuit whereof, like a piece of clock-work, moved by its own internal impulse, occasioned by the myriads of insects that dwelt within it; and butter, served out by the gill, that tasted like train oil thickened with salt."

[1] [It is a certain fact that in the middle of last century, and very much later, masts did very commonly go over the side in any stress of weather. The rope was extremely bad, and the standing rigging most unscientifically fitted. As the ships were also extremely crank, the readiness of the masts to go probably prevented more serious disasters.]

This is the landsman's view of the service painted with the licence of the novelist; and though probably not inaccurate in its leading features, may be thought to give a distorted and therefore false picture of the whole. We have, however, the unanimous testimony of every naval officer whose opinion is recorded, that the life of the seaman at that time was cruelly hard, whether considered in reference to the way in which he was pressed and forced to serve—often as he was coming home in a merchant ship from a long voyage, and reckoning on some short spell on shore with his wife and children; or to the foul and dismal lodging on board a ship, which shipwrights and officers had not yet learned to clean, to ventilate, or to light; to the clothes which contractors and pursers often, in fraudulent alliance, combined to supply of the most inferior shoddy; to the victuals which purveyors—even if honest, and they were not so always—could not prepare so as to keep good and wholesome, and which ignorance condemned to a sickening uniformity—an evil from which the service has been freed only well within the memory of every admiral now on the active list. When, to these loathsome victuals was added a noontide ration of half-a-pint of new rum served neat, and practically as much more as any man could buy, beg, or steal, it may be easily understood that drunkenness and the crimes that follow drunkenness were of every day occurrence.

And a large proportion of the officers were as bad as the men. Even on shore, away from the court and London society, life was rude; on board ship it was naturally ruder; but during the long peace, the navy had been allowed to "run down;" and when officers were wanted for

the large fleets that were with Haddock in the Mediterranean, with Norris in the Channel, and with Vernon in the West Indies, they had to be drawn, in considerable numbers, from the mercantile marine—men coarse in manners, illiterate, rude in speech, ignorant of discipline and of everything else except seamanship of a certain kind. These were the midshipmen, and master's mates; several of them became lieutenants; some became commanders and captains—not very many, but enough to give a bad name to all; and many who, by birth and early education, at any rate, were gentlemen, were infected by the prevalent rudeness, and imitated the coarseness of their social inferiors till the habit of it became a second nature.

With ships' companies without training, without discipline, badly fed, badly clothed, wasted with scurvy and fever; with officers ignorant, coarse, and brutal, how was success in war to be expected? Well might Walpole predict, in 1739, that the "ringing of bells" for joy at the war which he had been forced to declare would soon be followed by "wringing of hands." He did not, probably, know much of the details of the navy, but he could not help knowing that, in nearly twenty years of office, he had systematically neglected the armed services of the country, and could expect nothing but defeat.

And the failures of Vernon in the West Indies after his first success at Porto Bello, Mathews' unfortunate action in the Mediterranean, only redeemed by Hawke's personal share in it, the disgraceful affairs of Cornelius Mitchell in the West Indies, of the Hampton Court in the Channel, of Peyton and Griffin in the East Indies—it is unnecessary to extend the miserable list—all tended to warrant Walpole's

prophecy, and would have done so more completely but for the good fortune which brought to the front an unusual number of exceptional men—foremost among whom are to be reckoned, Anson, Warren, Hawke, Boscawen, and somewhat later, Saunders, Pocock, Rodney, Howe, and Keppel.

It is an old proverb that a bad workman complains of his tools: it is as true that a good workman will often turn bad tools into good ones. And this Hawke did. He changed the whole tone of the service; he raised the standard of duty among officers and men; he set a high example himself, and by his care for his men's comforts, by his constant attention to detail, he showed how much depended on their well-being.

We can now better understand the position of affairs as far as the navy was concerned in 1739, when the long dispute with Spain as to the freedom of trade in the West Indies culminated in the declaration of war; when Vernon went out to take Porto Bello "with only six ships," and when Hawke commissioned the 50-gun ship Portland for service among the Leeward Islands, with his head-quarters at Barbados; his principal duty being to cruise among the lesser Antilles, and to convoy fleets of merchant ships to the Tortugas and elsewhere.

His cruising was uneventful, no Spanish ships coming in his way; but from his letters we get glimpses both of his own care and seamanship, and of the miserable state of his ship. He asks permission of the admiralty to refit at Boston each year during the hurricane months, instead of, as was usual, at Antigua; pointing out that at Boston the refreshments of the crew were of a far better kind than at Antigua, and the cost of them less than even in England.

"It is generally the fatigue of heaving down that causes a sickness among the people; but at this place we can work the men with safety." To this proposal, the result of his previous West Indian experience, the admiralty give their assent. The permission, however, was subsequently withdrawn, owing to representations from the West Indian merchants. In this letter we get some idea of Hawke's foresight and consideration for his men, as well as the constant work of heaving down, then the recognized way of overhauling a ship in the absence of docks.

Notwithstanding his care, the ship was unhealthy, and many deaths occurred, due, no doubt, to the state of the ship, which was very old and ought to have been broken up long before. Not only the ship but her masts were perfectly rotten. In November 1741 she got into a storm off Boston, and made very bad weather of it. The straining started two leaks, through which the water poured in. She lay to 'under the mainsail and mizen'[1]; but a few hours later the mainmast was found to be sprung; so "the carpenters clapped on two fishes to it, but to no purpose, the spikes being no sooner drove than they started with the labour of the ship and the badness of the mast." It was therefore resolved to cut it away, and shortly after that was done, the fore-mast went over the

[1] It appears to have been the custom in the navy at that period to lay to under the mainsail. Tradition tells us that many of the prizes taken by Rodney on the 12th April, 1782, were lost from this cause, and that the practice was consequently discontinued. [The tradition is right; but these ships did worse than lay to under the mainsail; they lay to on the wrong tack, and were taken aback as the wind shifted in the squalls. See *Nautical Magazine*, 1880, pp. 719-20.]

side, and then the mizen-mast. "We got up top-gallant masts for jury masts, until the weather would permit us to get better, there being a very great sea." And in the course of the next two days, as the force of the wind abated and the sea went down, they got her jury-rigged, with topmasts for lower masts, a main top-gallant mast for a main topmast, and so on. In this plight they reached Barbados by the middle of December. In his letter to the admiralty, Hawke reported that the stumps of the old masts, when taken out, were found to be so rotten that they crumbled to powder, and that a stick was driven a full yard into the fore-mast; and a year later, when the ship was brought home to be paid off, he wrote, on arriving in the Channel, that he was afraid to move further than Portsmouth without another ship in company.

A few months later Hawke commissioned the Berwick, a new ship of 70 guns, for service in the Mediterranean, where there was already a large fleet, which, with the fleet in the West Indies, had rendered seamen scarce at home. A "hot press" filled the ship up with human beings, but in August, when she dropped down to the Nore, Hawke reported that several of the pressed men were "very little, weakly, puny fellows that have never been at sea, and can be of little or no service. What is worse," he added, "most of these poor creatures are now sick: there are several of them that, if they remain on board, will breed a sickness in the ship." It is therefore not surprising that on the 27th October, shortly after passing Gibraltar, he wrote again, that 123 of his working men were sick: that many of them were poor, puny fellows, picked up by the

press-gangs in London[1]; and the ship, being raw and green, was damp, notwithstanding all his care and endeavours to keep her clean and dry. At Port Mahon he landed the sick; probably got a draft of fresh men from the merchant ships, and finally joined the fleet at the Hyères Islands on the 11th January, 1744.

The position of affairs in the Mediterranean at this time was peculiar. Two years earlier the Spanish fleet, flying before Vice-Admiral Haddock, had been joined by the French—then nominally neutral—off Cape Gata, and had been escorted by them to Toulon, where it had since remained, virtually blockaded by the English fleet, at first under the command of Haddock, afterwards of Vice-Admiral Lestock, who succeeded him, and finally by Admiral Mathews, who was sent out in the twofold capacity of commander-in-chief of the fleet and ambassador at the court of Turin. England, at war with Spain on a quarrel of her own, was nominally at peace with France; but, as the ally of Austria had fought the battle of Dettingen; had, by a threat of bombardment, compelled the King of Naples to withdraw his troops from the Galli-span army in the north of Italy; and, by its fleet at the Hyères Islands, was preventing all reinforcements and supplies being sent to the army from either Spain or France.

[1] [A press-gang—a small party of men under an officer—had two functions which are very commonly confused: the one, to raise men by enlistment—that is, by paying them a prest or imprest of one shilling; the other to arrest forcibly, that is, to press seamen. No man could be legally pressed who was not a seaman; but any man could be prested; and as a certain head-money was paid for every man raised, any man who offered himself was prested without scruple—even though he might be a "weakly, puny fellow."]

But it was every day becoming more and more necessary that these reinforcements should be sent; with Sardinia hostile, it was impossible to send them by land; the logical deduction was that, in spite of the opposition of the English fleet, they must be sent by water. Accordingly, in December 1743 orders were sent to the French fleet at Toulon to get ready for sea, together with the Spanish ships; and at the same time arrangements were made for an invasion of England from Dunkirk, nominally commanded by Prince Charles Edward, and escorted by the fleet from Brest. With the failure of this attempt, we are not now concerned. If it was intended—as it probably was—to induce the English to weaken their fleet in the Mediterranean, it did not succeed even in this. There was a force in the Channel amply sufficient for all possibilities; and Mathews, having intelligence of the preparations that were being made in Toulon, called in all his ships. By the beginning of February he had collected his whole force in the roadstead of Hyères; and when on the 8th February the allied fleet came out of Toulon, the English also got under way.

In material force the two fleets were fairly equal. The numbers of ships of the line were twenty-eight English against twenty-seven French and Spanish; but the ships of the combined fleet were, on the average, bigger and more heavily armed than those of the English, and had also clean bottoms, whilst the English ships had been many months at sea, and their bottoms, in consequence, were very foul. On the other hand, the superiority of the English in frigates was considerable, and eight 50-gun ships, though now, for the first time, held to be

unfit for the line of battle, might very well efficiently support it.

But any advantage from this, or any other cause, was more than overbalanced by the personal ill-feeling that existed between the admiral and Lestock, his second in command. The two men were enemies of long standing, and when Mathews was appointed to the command, he had, in so many words, suggested that Lestock should be recalled. Not only was this not done, but a dormant commission was sent to Lestock, appointing him commander-in-chief in the event of Mathews dying or being compelled by ill-health to resign the command. If Mathews knew of this, it would naturally embitter the old quarrel; and however that may have been, it is certain that between the two there was a distinct antagonism. It is impossible to excuse the admiralty of the day for having placed these men together; yet we have seen history repeat itself in a precisely similar manner, in the sister service, at the time of the Crimean war.

The result might almost have been foretold by any student of human nature. Given a commander-in-chief, personally brave but ignorant, irritable, obstinate and incompetent; given a second in command resolved to confine himself to the strict letter of his orders, careless of the spirit of them; given also several incapable subordinates who could neither understand what the commander-in-chief meant, nor see what it was their clear duty to do, disaster might easily result; a miscarriage, at least, could certainly be counted on.

With a light easterly wind, the French in line of battle fairly well formed were steering to the south, followed by

the Spaniards in straggling disorder. The English were to windward, but in two days they were not able to get into line of battle. On the third—the 11th February—Mathews had no better success, and hoping, it may be, that in the ardour of battle things would right themselves, he made the signal to engage, and, himself in the Namur of 90 guns, accompanied by Captain Cornewall in the Marlborough, ran down to the enemy and brought the Spanish flagship, the Real Felipe, to close action. The Real Felipe's seconds were beaten to leeward; the Real Felipe herself was hard pressed; and on the other hand, the Namur suffered severely, the Marlborough was dismasted, Cornewall was killed. But none of the other ships of Mathews' division came to their support. In the van, Rear-Admiral Rowley in the Barfleur had drawn near the French line and had interchanged shots with the Terrible, the French flagship; but the leading ships kept aloof, afraid of being doubled on by the French who were extended far beyond them; and the whole of the rear division, under the command of Lestock, was several miles astern—far out of gunshot. Everything was in a hopeless muddle.

There were men there in command of ships who were known afterwards as good officers and competent admirals, within the limits of routine; there was only one who at the critical time showed himself able to interpret the admiral's confused orders by the circumstances of the action, or rather, to anticipate Nelson's celebrated memorandum that "in case signals can neither be seen nor perfectly understood, no captain can do very wrong if he places his ship alongside that of an enemy." This one was

the captain of the Berwick, who having in the first instance closed with the Spanish Neptuno and beaten her out of the line, marked the Poder keeping up a distant fire on three or four English ships which "were a-barking at her." Seeing this, Hawke bore up to close her and engaged within pistol shot. In twenty minutes the Poder was dismasted, many of her guns dismounted; she had lost 200 men killed and wounded, and was forced to strike. The loss of the Berwick was only five men wounded.

The Poder was taken possession of by a party from the Berwick, but she was afterwards recaptured when the French tacked to support the Spaniards, and the English retired before them. The next day the English fleet had at last got into one united line; but the allies were some distance to the south-westward, and though Mathews followed he could not overtake them. They were, however, obliged to abandon the Poder, after having set her on fire; but the fire extinguished itself, and the ship fell again into the hands of the English, only to be more effectually set on fire by Mathews' order, much to the annoyance of Hawke, who thought that she might have been preserved as a prize and a trophy.

Believing that further pursuit was useless, Mathews relinquished the endeavour and withdrew to Port Mahon, while the French put into Alicante, and the Spaniards into Cartagena; and the result of the battle—if it may be called one—was that the blockade of the sea route from Spain to Italy was effectually raised, that reinforcements and stores could be freely sent to the Galli-span army, and that the war in Italy took a turn favourable to the allies.

Of the courts martial in England, on the several captains

who had kept aloof from the fight, on Lestock who had taken no part in it, and on Mathews who had misconducted it, it is beyond my present purpose to speak. They revealed, perhaps, the lowest depth to which, in modern times, our navy has been permitted to sink, relieved only by the brilliant conduct of Hawke. He had shown that he could take initiative and responsibility, he had seen the right thing to do, and had risked a great deal in bearing down out of the line to carry out his views. That his ship was in good gunnery order is evident, notwithstanding that his crew were "poor puny fellows" some six months previous to the action. Here we have the highest type of naval officer. Cool courage and determination, prompt decision, a clear idea of the course to adopt, the leader of men who could command confidence in those serving under him, and a ship in such good order that he was able confidently to carry matters to a successful conclusion. It is unnecessary to dwell on this, but it is a combination of qualities which is given to few. Other naval heroes have excelled Hawke in special points of the above charter, but I doubt if any have so thoroughly united the qualities which ensure success in command.

There is one point connected with this wretched "miscarriage" which calls for notice—the absolute nature of the "Fighting Instructions," which laid down the obligation of fighting in line. The "line of battle" was a useful and safe formation in the first instance, but if rigidly adhered to in action, battles were almost necessarily indecisive. Ordinary human nature delights in a rule, and any such rule of conduct as was represented by the fighting instructions is usually founded on common-sense; but it is

merely a means to an end; and whether by sea or land, a hard and fast line is apt to become wooden, and dangerous in the presence of those who know how to take advantage of too rigid a system. There is a tendency in the present day to come back to the rule of the line of battle; but it should be enough to point out that all our naval victories have been gained by departing from the line, or breaking the line in one way or another. That this is true, from the days of the Armada to Trafalgar, all students of naval history must admit, while a salutary departure from precise rules has been proved to be equally necessary to attain success in military tactics.

After the action off Toulon Hawke remained in the Mediterranean under Admiral Rowley, evidently trusted and frequently in command of a squadron, till September 1745, when he paid off the Neptune which had latterly been Rowley's flagship, the ship being "foul and very leaky." He was then on shore for about a year, not in very good health. He was summoned as a witness on the trials of Lestock and Mathews in 1746, but he did not give evidence. In March 1747 he was appointed to the Mars, which was then in dock at Plymouth undergoing repairs, and was still there when Anson won his peerage off Cape Finisterre on the 3rd May.[1] On the 15th July a very large promotion of flag-officers was made; and for the first time those captains who were passed over for active promotion were put on a retired list as "superannuated rear-admirals."[2] Whether because they were supposed to have fallen into the age of the sere and yellow leaf, or for some other reason not now apparent, the joke

[1] [See *ante*, p. 184.]

[2] [*Ante*, p. 182.]

in the navy was that they were promoted to the yellow squadron. It was intended to shelve Hawke in this way; but the king, who had noted his conduct in Mathews' action, declared that "he would not have Hawke yellowed;" and so, contrary to the wish of the admiralty, he was made rear-admiral of the white, Boscawen, to whom the promotion was extended, being at the same time made rear-admiral of the blue.

On the 22nd July he hoisted his flag on board the Gloucester as second to Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Warren, who had succeeded Anson in command "of the western squadron." Warren was in bad health, and at his special request Hawke was allowed to take the fleet to sea. On the 5th September Warren resigned the command, which was entrusted to Hawke, but he did not receive his appointment and independent instructions till a month later. Three years before, the Western squadron had been under the command of Sir John Norris, the admiral of the fleet, whose service had been marked by the caution that might be expected from a very old man. Anson, who was now temporarily conducting the affairs of the admiralty, wrote to Warren expressing his uneasiness at sending the fleet to sea "under so young an officer." As Hawke was 42, we may suppose that he referred not to his age, but to his standing on the list of admirals.

His letters to Warren at this time have a peculiar interest as illustrating his pure and single-minded devotion to duty. He had been sent out to intercept a French convoy from Rochelle, which was known to be escorted by a strong force; but there were Spanish galleons on their way to Cadiz, a fact which seemed to be highly important

in Warren's eyes. Hawke, however, was not to be diverted from his main object, and on the 6th October he wrote that "he must lay aside all thoughts of the galleons, as it is impossible for him to divide his force. He proposes to cruise between the latitudes of 45° and 47° 30′ N in the meridian of Cape Ortegal, this being the most likely track for the French convoy." Incidentally also, he mentioned that "the ships joining him are far from being in a condition for distant cruises, through the negligence of the agent victualler, so that he will not be able to stay out beyond the end of October; but he is determined to cruise while he can keep any number of them together."

He had been for a few days on the station indicated, when —on the 14th October, in the early morning—being "94 leagues N by W of Cape Finisterre," the French were sighted on the weather-bow, both squadrons standing to the southward, with the wind at ESE. The French squadron in charge of the convoy consisted of nine ships of the line and some frigates, under the command of M. de l'Étenduère, a *chef d'escadre*, or commodore. Hawke's force was unquestionably superior; it consisted of fourteen ships of the line, but two of them were of only 50 guns, and the disparity of weight of metal and number of men was much less than might be supposed, owing to the greater individual force of the French ships.

The French commodore sent the merchant ships ahead under the escort of a 60-gun ship and the frigates, whilst, with the other eight ships under easy sail, he formed line between the English and his convoy. At first Hawke also formed line of battle; but afterwards, seeing his superiority

of number and judging that he was losing time, he made the signal for the whole squadron to chase, and half-an-hour later, his leading ships being within "a proper distance," the signal to engage. The action was at once begun; and as the other ships came up, they passed on from the rear towards the van of the enemy, and one by one the French ships were overwhelmed. Two only escaped, the Intrépide and the Tonnant, being, in fact, the two leading ships of the line; the Tonnant, greatly disabled, in tow of the Intrépide. They were followed by the Nottingham, Yarmouth, and Eagle; but night was closing in; Captain Saumarez of the Nottingham was killed; his ship, in some disorder, hauled to the wind, and the example was shortly afterwards followed by the other two. Some few of the merchant ships were taken, but the great bulk of them escaped for the time, to be captured on their arrival near the West Indies, Hawke having sent off a despatch to the commodore of the station to warn him to be on the look out for them.

Hawke's conduct of the battle seems altogether admirable. Being to leeward, he was unable to take full advantage of his numerical superiority. The French ships were well fought, and in good line, so that the narrow theatre of the combat forced the British ships to get in each other's way. It was an inconvenience undoubtedly, but Hawke was well aware of it, and accepted it. He wanted a complete victory, and to ensure this he had to attack at once, while the French were forced to stay and fight so as to give time for the convoy to escape. The example he himself set is noteworthy; the Severn, the first French ship which struck, hauled down her colours

to the Devonshire—Hawke's flagship; and both by example and signal, he showed, like Nelson, his determination to bring matters to an issue by close action. And he was gallantly supported by his captains, notably by Rodney, Saumarez, Harland, and Saunders. One exception was made. Fox of the Kent was accused by his fellows, and especially by Rodney, of not having done his duty. He was tried by court-martial, found to have erred in point of judgment, and was dismissed his ship. He was not employed again, and a couple of years later was placed on the list of "yellow" admirals.

On the side of the French, the conduct of the commodore and his squadron was extremely creditable. They formed a close line and supported each other loyally to the last, making an excellent fight of it against a very superior force, inflicting a loss on the British of 700 men, nearly equal to their own, which is given as 800. This protracted defence was partly, if not mainly due to the greater size of their ships, to the heavier metal, the larger crews, and, above all, to the thicker scantling. In the court-martial on Captain Fox, much stress was laid on the power of the Tonnant, a French 80-gun ship, which Fox was accused of having allowed to escape. It was stated that out of 134 shot from lower-deck guns which struck the French ship, only one penetrated! The greater power of the French ships was well known, and shortly before the action we find Warren writing to Anson—"I am greatly pleased to hear that it has been proposed, with prospect of success, to augment the number of men and weight of metal in all the different classes of our ships, to put them on a par with those of the French."

In England, when Hawke with his six prizes arrived at Spithead, the rejoicings for the victory were very great. Hawke himself was graciously received by the king—who always spoke of him as *his* admiral—and was rewarded with the Cross of the Bath. As compared with the peerage given to Anson for his victory over a much inferior force, the order of the Bath conferred on Hawke does not seem to have erred on the side of liberality. The position of the two men was, however, very different. Anson was a lord of the admiralty; Hawke was a very junior admiral who, by a fortunate accident, had been put in high command; and under such circumstances—as in the somewhat similar case of Nelson after the Nile—it is seldom that services are adequately recognized. The official letter shows that his conduct was highly appreciated by the admiralty; and a vacancy occurring just at this time, in the representation of Portsmouth, the Duke of Bedford, the first lord of the admiralty, wrote to the Mayor recommending Hawke, which seems to have been equivalent to his election. A letter from Keppel to Anson says—"I hear the town is to have Sir Edward Hawke for its member, and the bells were very troublesome yesterday on that account."

But Hawke was again at sea. Warren had resumed the command, and Hawke, at his own request, was serving under him—a proof, if any were needed, of his loyalty towards one who had done so much towards placing him in the prominent position which he now filled in public estimation. It was only for a few months. In May 1748 hostilities ceased; the preliminaries of peace were signed, and were celebrated by a promotion of flag-officers, in

which Hawke was advanced to be vice-admiral of the blue.

The Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was largely due to the naval successes of 1747, which had put an end to the sea-borne commerce of both France and Spain, and had rendered it impossible for either country to send reinforcements to their colonial possessions, and more especially to Canada and India. On shore our arms had sustained many reverses, and we had added some thirty millions to the National Debt, chiefly in payments to Austria for permission to fight her battles. But the naval successes were the ruling factor of the situation—a lesson which will bear repetition. It has been too much the custom to look upon naval actions as a series of duels, in which success means a "victory" with some immediate advantage; failure means "defeat" with some direct loss. It was to explode this fallacy that Captain Mahan wrote his *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, and we must refer to his brilliant pages for lessons as to the greater value of the indirect results of practical command of the sea. He calls attention to "the paramount though silent influence of sea-power on the course of events," and he points out how our naval predominance at this period, and in the Seven Years' War—chiefly shown in European waters—forced the French to lose India, "place after place falling, till Pondicherry itself surrendered, surrounded by land and cut off from the sea."

When war again broke out in 1755 Hawke was appointed to command the Western squadron, and in July sailed with orders to cruise in the Bay of Biscay to intercept a homeward-bound French squadron which had put into Cadiz.

The instructions were drawn out by the Lords Justices—the commission of regency during the absence of the king in Hanover—but presumably after consultation with the admiralty; and as Anson, at any rate, knew very well that, in ordinary course, in August or September, a ship or squadron going from Cadiz to Brest does not cross the Bay of Biscay, the intention is not quite clear. War had not been declared, and it is very probable that the cruise was nothing more than a sop to public opinion. When he learned that by making—as it was bound to do—a long stretch to the westward, the French squadron had got safely into Brest, Hawke returned to Portsmouth only to receive a *quasi* reprimand from the admiralty. Hawke replied that the beer was bad, the water abominable, and the men very sickly. "If their lordships thought he had not done his duty he was ready and willing to resign his command to any one else in whose abilities they might have more confidence."

Early in the following spring, 1756, he was again afloat, and on the 18th May war was declared. Two days later, Byng's action was fought. With the controversies which raged around Byng's conduct and his sad fate, we have now nothing to do. It may be that his ships were ill-equipped, but he showed none of the qualities required in a naval commander. The action itself was virtually a defeat, for he failed to relieve Minorca and returned with his squadron to Gibraltar. Whether Pitt was right in laying all the blame on the government may be disputed; but it is certain that the government was pusillanimous, and such an example was contagious.

Early in June Byng's failure was known in England,

though only through the enemy's reports; and Hawke, who had returned to Spithead in May, was sent to Gibraltar to supersede him. On the 16th he sailed in the Antelope, accompanied by Rear-Admiral Saunders, who was to supersede West, and Lord Tyrawley, to supersede General Fowke as Governor of Gibraltar. This "cargo of courage," as the wags called it, reached Gibraltar on the 4th July. Hawke had the unpleasant job of sending Byng and West home, and of making "immediate and expeditious" inquiry into the conduct of the captains. On the 10th July he sailed for Minorca, but he was too late; before he arrived the island was in full possession of the French, and their fleet had returned to Toulon. He was disappointed in the hope that it would put to sea and try conclusions with him. His Mediterranean command lasted till the 14th January, 1757, when he returned to Spithead; but there is ample evidence of his spirit and energy in restoring the prestige of the British flag and curbing the insolence of the Spaniards and the Austrian Italians, both of whom were not unnaturally hostile in feeling, though nominally at peace with Great Britain.

On the downfall of the Duke of Newcastle's ministry in November 1756, Anson had been dismissed from the admiralty, and there appeared, in some quarters, an inclination to hold him responsible for the loss of Minorca. In June 1757, however, when the ministerial crisis came to an end, and Pitt returned to office, virtually as prime minister, Anson was reappointed first lord of the admiralty. He wished Hawke to join the board, but this was prevented, owing, it was supposed, to a want of cordiality between him and the great minister. There are many

indications of Pitt's personal dislike of Hawke; but this did not blind him to his professional merit, or prevent his appointing him to the naval command of the expedition against Rochefort in the following September. But with the intended object of the expedition Hawke had very little to do. With a strong fleet, he convoyed the transports to Basque Roads; under his orders the island of Aix was occupied; and as the pilots were found to be untrustworthy or ignorant, Rear-Admiral Brodrick was sent to take soundings in order to find a proper place for landing the troops which were intended to destroy the shipping, docks, and naval stores at Rochefort. The report was favourable, but it was not acted upon.

After this there were several councils of war, "composed of four sea-officers and four land-officers," in accordance with special orders on the subject; but no landing was made, and the French had time to strengthen their works. Throughout Hawke had held "that the landing could be effected; that the troops ought to be landed for some further attempt;" but not taking upon himself to be a judge of land operations, he contented himself with urging the generals to decide upon something. However, nothing was done, though at one time the troops were put into the boats in order to attack Fort Fouras, the direct attack on Rochefort being abandoned. The fiery Wolfe, who was quartermaster-general, chafed at the inaction and proposed several plans; but he was not then known, and, on naval matters, at any rate, his criticisms are unreliable. At length on the 29th September, Hawke wrote officially to Sir John Mordaunt, that "should the general officers of the troops have no further operations to propose, he intends to proceed

to England without loss of time." To this letter the general replied that "after talking it over, we all agree in returning directly to England." Thereupon the fleet sailed and reached England on the 7th October.

A court-martial followed on Sir John Mordaunt, and he was acquitted. Hawke's reputation did not suffer materially, and he was graciously received by the king, but he seems to have felt the failure deeply. It has been suggested that the attack on the island of Aix was a mere waste of time; but it does not appear that it had anything to do with delaying the attack on Rochefort—the decision as to which lay entirely with the soldiers. Hawke, as a naval officer, was clear, determined, and enterprising; but in accordance with his character, he declined to dictate on any subject with which he was imperfectly acquainted. He had *les défauts de ses qualités*, and this was characteristic of his completeness of view. As a sea-officer, he was on sure ground, but member of parliament though he was, we hear little of him as a politician, and he seems to have avoided diplomacy. Unlike Nelson, whose energetic spirit led him to hold strong views on military matters, which were not always well founded, and to act a political part—as in the case of Caracciolo—he preferred to stick to his last as a sea-officer, and as such, he was certainly unrivalled in his own times.

From October to December Hawke was again at sea with his fleet; and in the early spring of 1758 was pressing on the admiralty the case of seamen discharged as unserviceable from disease or wounds, who were unable to receive their pay up to the date of their discharge, and thus—with money owing to them—"have nothing to subsist them on

their way home and are reduced to beg through all parts of the kingdom." His representations, urged with some force and pertinacity, seem to have annoyed the admiralty, and were no doubt closely connected with a later quarrel. At the moment his services were wanted. The French had intended to join their Mediterranean and Rochefort squadrons which, when united, were to proceed with a convoy to Louisbourg.

In the Mediterranean, however, Admiral Osborn had captured part of the squadron, and shut up the rest in Cartagena ; so it was now proposed that the Louisbourg convoy should sail under the escort of the Rochefort ships alone. To prevent this Hawke sailed from Portsmouth on the 12th March, with seven ships of the line and three frigates, but without the smaller vessels necessary for operations in shoal water. In the Basque Roads, on the 3rd April, he found five line of battle ships, six or seven frigates, and about forty merchant ships with 3000 troops on board. They all cut or slipped in great confusion, and escaped over the mud flats into Rochefort, the line of battle ships throwing their guns and stores overboard. What he could do with the frigates and the boats, Hawke did ; but he felt that more should have been done, and might have been done if he had been supplied with fire-ships and vessels of light draught. So, thoroughly discontented, he left Captain Keppel to blockade the convoy in the river, and returned to Spithead, when he applied for four days' leave to settle his private affairs. It was curtly refused ; his presence at Portsmouth was necessary to hasten the fitting out of the ships.

Pitt was, in fact, resolving on a series of descents on the

coast of France, which were to be on a smaller scale, under the escort of a squadron of vessels of lighter draught, commanded by a captain, and covered by the grand fleet. The captain selected for this service was Howe, who had commanded the Magnanime in the expedition against Rochefort in the previous year; and on the afternoon of the 10th May he called on Hawke with an order as to his proceedings. On this Hawke's wrath boiled over, and the same evening he wrote to the secretary of the admiralty—

"Last September I was sent out to command an expedition under all the disadvantages one could possibly labour under, arising chiefly from my being under the influence of land-officers in councils of war at sea. Last cruise I went out on a particular service almost without the least means of performing it. Now, every means to insure success is provided; another is to reap the credit; while it is probable I, with the capital ships, might be ordered to cruise in such manner as to prevent his failing in this attempt. To fit out his ships for this service I have been kept here, and even now have their lordships' directions, at least in terms, to obey him. He is to judge of what he wants for his expedition; he is to make his demands and I am to comply with them. I have therefore directed my flag immediately to be struck, and left their lordships' orders with Vice-Admiral Holburne; for no consequence that can attend my striking it without orders shall ever out-balance with me the wearing it one moment with discredit."

Hawke, however, could not be spared. He was sent for to the admiralty. Explanations were made; his feelings were soothed; there had been misunderstandings. He acknowledged that he had acted hastily, and on the 17th

he rehoisted his flag. The difficulty was got over by Anson assuming the command, Hawke serving under him; and on the 1st June the grand fleet put to sea, together with Howe's squadron and the troops. But Hawke's health was much impaired; on the 18th he asked permission to go to Spithead; and on arriving, applied for leave of absence, as being "altogether incapable of further duty." The leave was granted, the secretary of the admiralty writing that "the lords are much concerned for his indisposition." And after this, we hear nothing more of misunderstandings between Hawke and the admiralty. As illustrations of Hawke's character, of his sense of honour, of his determination neither to endure a slight nor to retain a nominal command, these details have a personal interest altogether out of proportion to their mere historical value.

For eleven months Hawke was now on shore; but on the 13th May, 1759—the *annus mirabilis*, "the wonderful year" of the song—he rehoisted his flag in the Ramillies, and on the 20th sailed from Torbay in command of a fleet of twenty-five sail of the line. Sir Charles Hardy was the vice-admiral; Francis Geary the rear-admiral; and among the captains were many already known as distinguished officers, who rose high in the service—Howe, Barrington, Keppel, Byron, Duff, and Hervey, afterwards third Earl of Bristol. The fact that six of them were sons of noblemen shows that interest was freely used to serve with Hawke. His task was to watch and blockade the Brest fleet, which, after June, was commanded by M. de Conflans, vice-admiral of France.

This is the first that we hear of a regular blockade, and it is worth while to explain how the practice which became,

later on, a regular system, originated. For some time past it had become the custom to keep a watch over French ports, chiefly by means of frigates, the ships being detached in accordance with information received. The squadrons were small during the winter and early spring, but were strengthened early in the summer, when operations were more likely to be undertaken, though nothing that could fairly be described as a system of blockades appears to have been in force till 1759.

Early in that year preparations for the invasion of England, Ireland, and Scotland were almost ostentatiously made by the French. From the Morbihan, transports, escorted by the combined Brest and Toulon squadrons, were to embark a large force for Ireland. From Havre the invasion of England was to be effected by means of flat-bottomed boats. From Dunkirk a small force was to be embarked in five frigates, for Scotland. To meet these threats Hawke detached Reynolds, subsequently relieved by Duff, to watch the Morbihan; Rear-Admiral Rodney was in the Channel watching Havre, which he successfully bombarded in July; Captain Boys watched Thurot, the famous privateersman, off Dunkirk; Admiral Smith—popularly known as Tom of Ten Thousand—commanded a reserve fleet in the Downs; Hawke himself was off Brest, and Boscawen was off Toulon.

Naturally the operations of the squadrons sent to watch an enemy inside a port assumed the character of a blockade, and our immediate interest is the way in which Hawke carried this out. When he appeared off Brest the French fleet was far from ready; so he was able to keep his ships efficient, sending them by two at a time to Plymouth, at

spring-tides, to be cleaned—that is, to have them heeled or laid on the mud, and their bottoms recoated with tallow. Captain Hervey in the Monmouth, with some smaller vessels, was ordered to watch the port, and he frequently anchored "close to the harbour's mouth, in sight of the French fleet." His conduct in this service, in which he was very active, won the approbation of his admiral, who praised his "diligence and address." The main body of the fleet cruised at some distance off the port in fine weather.

During the whole of the summer and autumn Hawke maintained this arduous blockade. From May to November he held Brest a sealed port; till then, there had been nothing like it, and it was forty years before it was repeated by St. Vincent and Cornwallis. In westerly gales he ran for shelter to Plymouth, or Torbay, knowing that the French could not come out; but directly the wind shifted he was off his port again. That Hawke could accomplish this entirely new departure, and be loyally served by his captains, speaks well for his strength of character; yet this is the man whom Horace Walpole absurdly describes as "really weak, and childishly abandoned to the guidance of a Scotch secretary."

In other respects we have proof of Hawke's high qualifications for command, in his determination to get rid of incompetent officers, and especially in his care for his men's well-being. Again and again he complains of the bad beer; he asks for live bullocks and sheep; he points out to the admiralty that the "relief of the squadron depends more on the refreshment of the ships' companies than on cleaning the ships;" he prefers a mere partial cleaning, so that the men should not be "harassed and fatigued;" but

that the ships should be "at rest for ten days in port, and at their departure bring such a quantity of fresh meat as will keep sweet at this season, two or three live bullocks and twenty sheep." He insisted that the medical officers should be efficient, a point on which the navy-board was inclined to try conclusions with him, as interfering with their patronage. One surgeon he sent home, "his infirmities rendering him incapable of his duty." Another he ordered to be summarily discharged, and to the complaint of the navy-board, he replied—

"There was no probability of being able to try him by court-martial for his disobedience of orders and other dirty crimes; nor could I, in the circumstances the ship was then in, hourly in the face of the enemy, admit of sentries being kept on so worthless a fellow. I shall not enter into a dispute with you about my authority as a commanding officer, neither do I ever think of inconveniences or prejudice to myself, where the good of the service is concerned."

And so the summer and autumn wore on. But one change had taken place in the situation. On the 18th August Boscawen had taken or distroyed M. de la Clue's squadron from Toulon in the Straits of Gibraltar;[1] and the intended junction with M. de Conflans was no longer to be feared. But even without the Mediterranean ships, Conflans's fleet was nearly equal to Hawke's, worn out as it was with constant cruising.

In November the weather set in stormy. Hawke was determined to stay out as long as possible, but on the 5th he wrote to the admiralty that if it blows hard from the west he must put into Torbay. "Single ships may struggle

[1] See *post*, p. 265.

against a hard gale when a squadron cannot." Even Horace Walpole could see what an advance this attempt to keep the sea in November was over what had been considered practicable not so long before, when Sir Clowdisley Shovell thought it dangerous for the big ships to stay out after September; but he was so ignorant of what really took place that he supposed Hawke had been driven by bad weather to Gibraltar, when in point of fact he was in Torbay. He came in on the 10th; put to sea again on the 12th; was driven back on the 13th; and again got out on the 14th, having meanwhile shifted his flag to the Royal George of 100 guns, the Ramillies being left behind, leaking badly and in need of a thorough refit.

Short as his absence was it permitted much to happen. M. Bompart, who, with a squadron of seven sail of the line, had for some weeks been expected from Martinique, arrived, and finding the coast clear, ran into Brest with the same westerly gale that forced Hawke to leave the coast. The reinforcement brought to Conflans a supply of trained and experienced seamen, whom he at once distributed to the fleet, and on the 14th November put to sea with 21 ships of the line. It was the very same day that Hawke, with 23, sailed from Torbay.

And now we come to the final stage, when he was to reap the reward of his labours, his seaman-like tenacity and energy. On the 17th he heard of the French fleet's being at sea, working its way to the eastward. He needed no further assurance that it was gone to the Morbihan, and "carrying a press of sail all night, with a hard gale at SSE, in pursuit, he makes no doubt of coming up with them, either at sea or in Quiberon Bay." And so for

Quiberon Bay he pressed on without hesitation, the fleet of 23 ships of the line being preceded by the Maidstone and Coventry frigates, one on each bow.

On the 20th November he found the French fleet, which he had so long watched, and by nightfall had obtained one of the most memorable of our many naval victories. The account which follows is, in great part, taken from Hawke's own despatch, written on the 24th, when as yet he was not fully aware of the completeness of the victory that he had gained by his timely audacity. He thus scarcely does himself justice, though he writes in the tone of a man who feels that he has done his duty—"When I consider the season of the year, the hard gales on the day of action, a flying enemy, the shortness of the day, and the coast they were on, I can boldly affirm that all that could possibly be done has been done."

At half-past eight in the morning of the 20th November —Belle-isle bearing E by N ¼ N, 13 leagues—the Maidstone signalled a fleet, and this was shortly afterwards confirmed by the Magnanime, which Hawke had sent ahead to make the land. "The signal was immediately made to form line abreast in order to draw all the ships in the fleet up." The French had been in chase of Duff's squadron of frigates and bombs, which had put to sea on the appearance of Conflans's fleet; but when Hawke's fleet was signalled, they hauled in for Quiberon Bay, "going off under as much sail as they could carry, and at the same time keep together. It was blowing fresh, increasing to a gale at NW, and with heavy squalls;" but seeing that they were making off Hawke signalled the seven ships nearest the enemy to chase and to draw into line ahead of him, hoping to stop

them till the rest of his fleet could come up, so that "no time should be lost." The rest of the fleet was also ordered to form as they chased; and "we crowded after them with every sail our ships could bear."

In this determined spirit the action was fought. We do not go to a ballad for technical or tactical accuracy, but the spirit is admirably given in the vigorous lines[1]—

"'Twas long past noon on a wild November day
When Hawke came swooping from the west;
He heard the breakers thundering in Quiberon bay,
But he flew the flag for battle, line abreast.
Down upon the quicksands, roaring out of sight,
Fiercely beat the storm-wind, darkly fell the night;
But they took the foe for pilot and the cannon's glare for light,
When Hawke came swooping from the west."

Neither the storm nor the perils of a dangerous coast could deter the British admiral from forcing on a general engagement; and his own example was as brilliant as it had been in 1747. His well-known answer to the master of his ship, who remonstrated against his order to place the Royal George alongside the French admiral on account of the perils of the navigation, is characteristic. "You have done your duty, sir, in showing the danger; you are now to comply with my order and lay me alongside the Soleil Royal." Such conduct reaped its reward. As a modern historian sums up the result: "Two English ships were lost on the shoals, but the French fleet was ruined, and the disgrace of Byng's retreat wiped away."[2]

Some further details of the action may now be given. Quiberon Bay is formed by the coast of Morbihan on the

[1] Henry Newbolt's *Admirals All.*
[2] J. R. Green's *Short History of the English People.*

east, while on the west is a promontory stretching to the southward, at the extremity of which are the detached islands of Belle-isle and Houat, forming a semi-circle with the reefs Cardinals and Four. Conflans, trusting to a good pilot, entered the bay at the head of his fleet; passing between Belle-isle and the Cardinals. It is true that he thus left his rear ships open to attack, but he could not believe that in the gale then blowing, the enemy would follow him among the shoals, ignorant as he naturally was of the coast. With a more cautious admiral, Conflans's movement would have been successful. Unfortunately for him, Hawke commanded the British fleet, and he followed without hesitation. To clear the Cardinals, the ships had to haul to the wind before keeping away into the bay, and this must have required good seamanship in the middle of an engagement. Two French ships, the Thesée and Superbe, capsized and sank from this cause and from endeavouring to fight their lower tier of guns.

A letter from the chaplain of one of the ships, dated the 25th November—only five days after the battle—gives some interesting details.[1] From the equality of the combatants, it says—

"It was expected that the action would be very great and general, but there was not an Englishman, high to low, who did not assure himself of victory. The admiral told his officers he was for the old way of fighting, to make downright work of them. At noon our headmost ships were pretty near them; and between one and two the Warspite (Sir John Bentley) and the Dorsetshire (Denis) began to fire, and were then abreast of the Cardinal rocks.

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1759, p. 557.

Presently afterwards, the Revenge (Storr), Resolution (Speke), Torbay (Keppel), Magnanime (Lord Howe), Swiftsure (Sir Thomas Stanhope), Montagu (Rowley), and Defiance (Baird) came into action."

A French account says that these ships attacked the four French rear ships, doubling upon them to windward and to leeward. The French ships being the Formidable, Rear-Admiral du Verger, the Thésée, M. de Kersaint, the Héros, and the Superbe. This writer puts the time somewhat later, but his graphic description of the action is worth repeating—

"À trois heures, un feu très vif s'engagea entre ces douze vaisseaux. Le ciel était bas et sombre, la mer, agitée depuis vingt-quatre heures, roulait des lames énormes que l'on voyait au loin se briser contre les écueils ; la brise qui battait les deux escadres et la côte d'un souffle égal et continu de la tempête, se chargeait parfois de grains violents, par lesquel les vaisseaux, subitement lancés dans le vent, se froissaient et se déchiraient."[1]

To continue the chaplain's narrative. The Formidable was forced to strike by the broadsides of the Resolution, but she only hauled down her colours as the Royal George came up. She had made a gallant defence, the admiral being killed, and 300 men.

"It was now 4 o'clock. The Royal George continued advancing, intending to go alongside the Soleil Royal, which had endeavoured to succour her rear ships. She passed the Torbay, which was closely engaged with the Thésée of 74 guns, and soon afterwards sent that ship to the bottom. On the other side was the Magnanime, who kept up an incessant fight with the Héros, and in

[1] Rivière : *La Marine sous Louis XV.*

the end forced her to strike. She afterwards ran ashore and was burnt. The two commanders-in-chief were now very near, and M. Conflans gave the English ship her broadside; the Royal George returned the uncivil salutation; but after two or three exchanges of this kind, the Marshal of France declined the combat and sheered off."

He then describes how the Royal George engaged the French vice-admiral in the Tonnant, and other ships; but they all followed the example of their superior! "The fifth ship, the Superbe, escaped not so well," and she sank alongside of him. We need not follow the chaplain further in his admiration of the heroic part played by the commander-in-chief; but his narrative makes it clear that the Royal George was in the thick of the fight, having been engaged with all three French admirals. With such an example, it is no wonder that all the captains did well —"acted like angels," as Hawke enthusiastically said afterwards.

About 5 o'clock, it being quite dark, and on a lee shore, the admiral made the signal to anchor. In the morning he found himself well inside the bay, the Cardinals bearing W ½ S. The Soleil Royal and Héros, which had anchored among the English ships, cut their cables and ran ashore. The Essex was at once signalled to slip in pursuit; but as she was running down, another signal directed her to go to the assistance of the Resolution, aground on the Four. In attempting to do this she also got aground, and both ships were lost, though most of their crews were saved.

The result of the action then, was that six French line of battleships were taken, sunk, or burnt, the Soleil Royal among the latter, M. de Conflans escaping to the shore

half naked; seven got into the Vilaine over the bar with only twelve feet of water on it, being hauled through the mud, after throwing their guns and stores overboard; but of these only three were saved, the others having broken their backs by taking the ground at every tide. The remainder of the fleet escaped to Rochefort; Keppel, who was sent after them, reporting that they had got high up the Charente. Hawke tried by fireships to destroy the French ships in the Vilaine, but two days of heavy weather made it impossible. Our losses in the battle were extremely small, amounting to only 50 killed and 250 wounded; the only officer killed was Lieutenant Price of the Magnanime.

The battle of Quiberon Bay was felt at the time to be a crowning victory. Even Horace Walpole was for once betrayed into admiration of Hawke, and he describes the fight in glowing language; while Smollett speaks of it as "one of the most perilous and important actions that ever happened in any war between the two nations; for it not only defeated the projected invasion, which had hung menacing so long over the apprehensions of Great Britain, but it gave the finishing blow to the naval power of France." A concluding remark in the chaplain's letter already referred to, is highly important and suggestive. He says, "Sir Edward has been very liberal in his praises, without a single imputation to cast a shade on the triumph of the day." It was but fifteen years since Mathews' action, and what a change of spirit is here shown. But we need not go to Mathews. Benbow, at an earlier date, Howe, at a later, and even Hawke himself, when he was less well known and trusted, had complaints to make of

their captains. Nelson and Hawke alone could infuse their spirit into all who commanded under them; and though there are great contrasts in the characters of the two men, the conduct of Hawke at Quiberon Bay may, in many respects, be considered the prototype of Nelson's at Aboukir.

We have seen how Conflans trusted to his not being followed among shoals in bad weather on a dark November day, and how grievously he was disappointed. Brueys, too, clung to the hope that Nelson would not attack, late as it was that evening of the 1st August, 1798; and Villeneuve plaintively reported that much could have been done before the morning. In both cases, plausible reasons could have been given for caution and delay, but neither Hawke nor Nelson hesitated. In the words of Villeneuve, "nous voir et nous attaquer à été l'affaire d'un moment." And, in both cases, their timely audacity won a brilliant victory for their country. They knew the weapon they had themselves helped to forge, and they rightly gauged the risks as small compared with the advantage to be won.

Hawke remained on the French coast till the 17th January, 1760, when he returned to England. The hardships and anxieties of the command were telling upon him, and on the 16th December he had written—"I have now been thirty-one weeks on board, without setting my foot on shore, and cannot expect that my health will hold out much longer. I therefore hope to be relieved."

Amidst so much that was extraordinary in the battle of Quiberon Bay, not the least curious thing was the very sparing manner in which the men who had achieved this great and most timely victory were rewarded. Bonfires,

illuminations, thanks of parliament, letters of approval, royal smiles, cost little, and—in the words of the proverb—"butter no parsnips." And beyond these, Sir Charles Hardy, the second in command, got—nothing; of the captains who had crowded into the bay in pursuit of the French, two were acquitted by court-martial for losing their ships; the others received no recognition; the seamen were permitted to return to a diet of "salt horse," possibly on account of a succession of easterly gales, though the sufferers found a different reason for the neglect, and said—

"Ere Hawke did bang,
Monsieur Conflans,
You sent us beef and beer;
Now Monsieur's beat
We've nought to eat,
Since you have nought to fear."

And Hawke?—Hawke, whose head, whose heart, whose hand, had planned, had directed, had achieved this mighty result—Hawke was awarded a pension of £1500 a year for two lives; £1500 a year for the greatest victory at sea recorded in history, except—perhaps—Trafalgar! £1500 a year for the destruction of the French navy! Either the "Great Commoner" was in a more economical mood than when he lavished subsidies to enable the King of Prussia to remove his neighbour's landmark, or he was mindful of a personal pique against the admiral who had rendered his administration glorious. Some years later, the pension was increased to £2000, and there it remained.

Hawke's active career practically closed with this memorable action, though he rehoisted his flag in August 1760, and his time, till the peace, was divided between the

command of the fleet in the Bay of Biscay and the command at Portsmouth. He struck his flag for the last time on the 3rd September, 1762. On the 21st October he was promoted to be admiral of the white, and on the 21st December, to be rear-admiral of Great Britain; on the 21st October, 1765, to be vice-admiral of Great Britain, and on the 15th January, 1768, to be admiral and commander-in-chief of the fleet.[1] In 1766 he was appointed first lord of the admiralty, and held the office for the next five years.

Of Hawke as an administrator we do not hear much. He had to contend with the national dislike to preparation for war in time of peace; but he is said to have laid it down as a maxim that "Our fleet could only be termed considerable in the proportion it bore to that of the House of Bourbon;" and it is stated that whilst he broke up fourteen line of battle ships, he built thirteen and left fifteen on the stocks. We may thus feel sure that he closely watched the progress of ship construction in France.

It has already been said that he was no politician; and this probably accounts for his mistake in continuing to hold office when the government changed and Lord North became prime minister. In those days of heated partisanship he could not expect to escape being a target for the irrelevant criticisms of Horace Walpole or the sneers of Junius, the former calling him "indolent and almost superannuated," while the latter contemptuously wrote "that no expense should be spared to secure him an honourable and affluent retirement." Against these ill-natured and ill-

[1] *Dictionary of National Biography.*

informed depreciations, we may, however, set the testimony of Keppel, who spoke of him as "the Father of the British Navy," and said, "that having sat with him at the board, he knew his conduct both in his civil and military capacity; and that he had left behind him a name unrivalled in the maritime records of his country."

In 1771 Hawke was forced to retire on account of ill-health; but his long service received no recognition for another five years. When at last a peerage was conferred upon him, even Walpole admitted that it was deserved, and that it was unsolicited. For five years longer he lived at Sunbury, keenly interested in the affairs of the navy, grieving over their misconduct, and corresponding with his old friends.

That a man of this high character, conscientious, determined, patriotic, brilliant in action, should found a school was inevitable, and in Rodney, Keppel, and Howe he left worthy followers to perpetuate the traditions he had done so much to frame. Of his tactical theories we know little except that he advocated close action as the one thing needful. Writing to Sir Francis Geary, who had served with him during the blockade of Brest in 1759, and in 1780 was in command of the grand fleet, he says, "If you should be so lucky as to get sight of the enemy, get as close to them as you can. Do not let them shuffle with you by engaging at a distance, but get within musket shot if you can." Tactically, then, we must judge of the tree by its fruits. It is certain that he would not allow himself to be hampered by "the fighting instructions," and his two principal actions were fought on the soundest tactical principles. It is to be regretted that he had no opportunity

of fighting an action with an equal fleet at sea, but we may feel sure that he would have disregarded precise rules, that he would have taken advantage of every opportunity offered to him by the enemy, and that he would have been no more content than Nelson himself with anything less than the complete destruction of his opponents. This is high praise, and we doubt whether as much can be said of any of his successors except Nelson.

He died at Sunbury full of years and honour in 1781, leaving an example which is well worthy of study by those now entrusted with the task of preserving intact the honoured traditions of our national service.

BOSCAWEN

BOSCAWEN.

VII

EDWARD BOSCAWEN

EDWARD BOSCAWEN, third son of the first Viscount Falmouth, was born on the 19th August, 1711. On the mother's side he had a right to some of the Churchill talent ; for his mother was a daughter of Arabella Churchill, sister of the Duke of Marlborough, mother of the Duke of Berwick.[1] In their Cornish origin there was a first point of resemblance between the two great sailors of the middle of the eighteenth century—Hawke and Boscawen—whose names, then as now, ran naturally together as trusted commanders and worthy rivals for public favour. During the wars of 1739–1748 and 1755–62 they frequently crossed and recrossed each other's path, and it is impossible not to compare them ; but we shall be in a better position to do so at the close of this short account of Boscawen's services.

On the 3rd April, 1726, he went to sea on board the Superbe of 60 guns, and sailed in her, a few days later, to join the fleet of Vice-Admiral Hosier in the West Indies. At

[1] [It is, perhaps, not so generally known that he also could claim kindred with Drake. Arabella Churchill's mother was grand-daughter of Sir Bernard Drake, of Ashe, a cousin of Sir Francis. Surely a remarkable fighting stock—Francis Drake, Marlborough, Berwick, Boscawen. Lord Raglan was Boscawen's grandson.]

a time when we are raising the age of entry in the navy to an average of fifteen, which many naval officers think a dangerous mistake, it is worth remarking that Boscawen was nearly fifteen when he entered the service, and that some of our most distinguished officers—Lord Cochrane for one—were much older. In modern times, too, the older age of entry has produced good officers. Sir George Tryon was over sixteen when he joined the navy; and though his biographer[1] will not claim for him that he was a great man, as circumstances refused him the crucial test of active command during war, it would be impossible to deny his talent and his unrivalled knowledge of the service to which he devoted his life.

After three years in the Superbe in the West Indies, Boscawen served for three more years on the home station and in the Mediterranean with Sir Charles Wager, and was promoted to be lieutenant on the 25th May, 1732. It is certainly worthy of note that Boscawen, as Hawke, served his full time in the subordinate position, and did not become a lieutenant till he was very near twenty-one. Similarly he was nearly twenty-six when, on the 12th March, 1737, he was promoted by Sir John Norris, then commanding in the Channel, to be captain of the Leopard, a 50-gun ship, which gave him post-rank at once. The admiralty confirmed the commission, and in June 1738 he was appointed to the Shoreham of 20 guns. In June 1739 the Shoreham was sent to the West Indies, and Boscawen was there when war broke out with Spain in that year.

On the 5th November, when Vice-Admiral Vernon

[1] Rear-Admiral C. Penrose Fitz-Gerald.

sailed from Port Royal to attack Porto Bello, the Shoreham was refitting; and as his ship would not be ready for sea, Captain Boscawen was allowed to serve on board the flag-ship as a volunteer. After the capture he was employed, under Captain Knowles of the Diamond, as an engineer, and he assisted in blowing up the forts; a work of much difficulty, as they were very strongly built. In February 1741, being then actually in command of the Shoreham, he was detached by Vernon to look into Port Louis of Hispaniola, with a nominal request for permission for the fleet to wood and water, and really to ascertain what had become of the French fleet under the Marquis d'Antin. He was able to bring out news that D'Antin, having lost two-thirds of his men by sickness, had been obliged to return to France; and Vernon, thus relieved of all apprehension of French interference, decided to attack Cartagena.

It is not necessary to say much of this unfortunate expedition. The Shoreham's share in it was necessarily insignificant, though Boscawen, by a sort of natural selection, was put in command of a force of 300 sailors and 200 soldiers, to land on the south side of the Boca Chica, and destroy a troublesome battery. And this he did on the night of the 17th March. The fort was taken in the rear, and carried after a short, sharp resistance. The guns were spiked; gun-carriages, platforms, magazines, etc., set on fire, and Boscawen's party returned to their boats having sustained very little loss. After the failure of the assault on St. Lazar, the sickness which raged among the troops rendered any further attempt impossible. It was decided to re-embark the men and withdraw; but before leaving, the forts, castle, and batteries which had been captured

were destroyed; and in this service, Boscawen, who had succeeded to the command of the Prince Frederick, was again employed under Knowles. In May 1742 the Prince Frederick returned to England; and in the following month Boscawen was appointed to the Dreadnought of 60 guns.

There is no doubt that Boscawen's rapid promotion was due, to some extent, to family interest; but he owed much to his distinguished gallantry and professional qualifications. It is easy to disparage the quality of "rough courage," to use Horace Walpole's expression when referring to Boscawen; but it will be admitted to be a necessity for a naval or military officer; and though it is a pleasing fancy in these piping times of peace to assume that all Englishmen, at least, have this essential, it is certain that when serious fighting is to be done, it has been found that some, who had high reputations as good officers, have not escaped the imputation of "shyness" or "misconduct," the naval euphemisms for cowardice. In the wars in which Boscawen was engaged, no less than four flag officers were suspected of having failed in personal courage; and Marryat, who saw much active service during the Napoleonic war, has, in Peter Simple, drawn—probably from life—the portrait of one captain as a rank coward. Courage such as that undoubtedly possessed by Boscawen, is accordingly a high quality, and one not so common as is generally assumed.

The position of responsibility to which Boscawen had now attained, makes it advisable to recur, for a moment, to the state of the navy at the time of the attack on Cartagena, though it is unnecessary to repeat what I have already said

in the previous chapter. During the long peace, the reduced state of the navy had slackened the bonds of discipline, and lack of supervision had allowed the most abominable corruption to establish itself in the dockyards and storehouses. This affected all departments of supply, and especially the victualling department. We have seen how often Hawke had to complain of the quality of the provisions; and I have quoted Smollett's vigorous description of those issued to the seamen in the West Indies; but as this may be thought to be written with the licence of a novelist, I will refer to a pamphlet published in 1757, under the title of *The Royal Navy-Men's Advocate*, in which "the persons who have been concerned in victualling the royal navy" are charged with offences of which "no man who is not hackneyed in the vilest practices, and become callous by habitual villainy can read without astonishment and indignation."[1] One William Thompson, a cooper in the victualling yard, whose testimony seems to have been uncontradicted, though he was got rid of on a frivolous pretext,[2] states that the casks are frequently filthy and putrid, the meat that of animals that had died, and the brine "stinking"; with similar details of neglect and swindling on the part of contractors. The dry stores were no better. One Lloyd, late

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1757, p. 114.

[2] [In April 1745 Thompson (who is described as a man of some education, the son of a clergyman) was appointed 'Foreman of the Pickle Yard Coopers.' His complaints to the superintendent began in June, and in the following January he was discharged. The victualling board reported that he was incompetent; but the correspondence as published in the pamphlet referred to, and in others which followed it, makes it pretty clear that the true reason was his unseasonable and inconvenient revelations.]

Inspector of Dry Stores at the Victualling Yard in London, states that "meal, flour, groats and other stores" which he had rejected as "foul and unwholesome," were frequently "barrelled up and sent away" for issue to the ships.[1]

I need not dwell upon these mal-practices, but it is important that the difficulties, with which men like Hawke and Boscawen had to contend, should be appreciated, and that it should be realized that they could not rely on the departments whose duty it was to supply the stores and provisions. It should be remembered that these departments were full of abuses, and that jobbery was rampant; while they were so independent of the admiralty that the latter often complained of them with but little result.

I must now return to Boscawen. He served in the Dreadnought under Sir John Norris and Sir Charles Hardy in 1743–44; and on the 27th April in the latter year he chased and captured the French frigate Médée of 26 guns and 240 men, the first capture made during the war with France. This ship was found to be too weak for the navy, but she did good service as a privateer, under the name of Boscawen. In 1744 Boscawen commanded the Royal Sovereign, guard-ship at the Nore, and in the following year he was mainly employed in the important though

[1] [There is no doubt that the supply departments at this time were extremely bad, perhaps at their worst; but similar disgusting offences have been reported at much later dates—notably in the parliamentary inquiry of 1784—whenever supervision has been relaxed. It can never be forgotten that the loss of the Franklin Arctic expedition may be in great measure attributed to the wholesale fraud of a "respectable" firm of contractors, who supplied filth unutterable—uncleaned paunches and other offal—in place of "preserved meat." Cf. Richardson's *Polar Regions*, p. 163, where, however, the disgusting nature of the contents of the tins is scarcely hinted at.]

uneventful duty of superintending the hired ships in the river. In January 1746 he was appointed to the Namur of 74 guns, a cut-down 90-gun ship, and in her was employed in the Channel under Vice-Admiral Martin.

In the spring of 1747 the Namur formed one of Vice-Admiral Anson's squadron, which went out to intercept a strong French force about to sail for Cape Breton.[1] It fell in with it off Cape Finisterre on the 3rd May, and in the action that followed the Namur bore a distinguished part. She was closely engaged from the first, and Boscawen received a severe wound in the shoulder. Horace Walpole goes so far as to say[2] that Boscawen and Anson were subsequently on bad terms, as the latter "carried off all the glory of the victory though Boscawen had done the service;" a statement evidently unfair, though it shows the high estimate which was generally formed of Boscawen's conduct. Anson did indeed lose time at first in the endeavour to form line of battle; but he quickly recognized that this would be a mistake and made the signal for a general chase. The chasing ships were almost forced to break the French line and to attack the enemy on each side, at the risk, no doubt, of firing into each other, but to the certain destruction of their opponent. In this way the Sérieux was knocked to pieces by the Devonshire and Namur, which attacked her on opposite sides. This question of the advantage of attacking the enemy on both sides,

[1] [See *ante*, p. 183.]

[2] *Memoirs of George II*, i. 169. [But Walpole never mentions Anson without some spiteful or scurrilous remark. This one has the further disadvantage of being untrue; Anson and Boscawen continued on the best possible terms.]

with the risk referred to, is one which was argued before the battle of the Nile, between Saumarez and Nelson, the latter being in favour of taking the risk and doubling on the enemy; a plan which—as is well known—was carried out with complete success.

On the 15th July, 1747, there was a large promotion of flag-officers, the numbers being increased so as to include Boscawen, who—a captain of ten years' standing—was the junior of the batch. Hawke, who was considerably his senior, was made a rear-admiral of the white at once. For the first time a retired list of admirals was formed of the senior captains not promoted to active flag rank. This custom is one which has since been continued; but though a salve to individuals, it is not clear that every captain has a vested right to promotion, even on the "yellow list"; and it has its disadvantages, as frequently officers, of little service or merit, are enabled to pose as admirals, as if they had commanded fleets.

Shortly after his promotion Boscawen was appointed to the command of an expedition bound for the East Indies, and by his commission, to be commander-in-chief, both by sea and land. His squadron consisted of six ships of the line and four smaller vessels, with eleven of the East India Company's ships on board of which were 1500 soldiers. With these he left England in November 1747; and having been joined at the Cape of Good Hope by four Dutch ships with 400 soldiers, he arrived, on 23rd June, 1748, off Mauritius, which he had orders to attack, and anchored for the night two leagues to the east of the harbour of St. Louis. Little information about the island or its defences was available, and the French, having been

warned of the probable attack, had erected numerous batteries round the coast. Boscawen detached the principal engineer and artillery officers to search for a suitable place for landing the troops. Their report was opposed to attempting a landing anywhere to the east of the harbour; it might be effected, they thought, on the other side. This, the masters of the several ships reported, on examination, to be impracticable; but a landing might be made abreast of the anchorage.

Boscawen called a council of war to consider these reports; but the council was unwilling to act without some definite information; and having failed to procure any, a second council of war, on the 25th, decided "that the attack on the Island of Mauritius would be attended by the loss of so many men and so much time, that the armament might lose the opportunity of undertaking the siege of Pondicherry—which was the principal object of the expedition—before the setting in of the north-east monsoon." It is a modern truism that councils of war never fight; but at that period they were considered necessary, and officers in high command had been blamed for not calling them together. And in this instance, it is clear that Mauritius was rather a large morsel to be snapped up by surprise *en route* to India, and neither Boscawen nor the council of war can be blamed for not persisting in the attempt, considering the time that had been lost at the Cape, waiting for the Dutch troops, and the want of all reliable information.

On the 29th July the squadron arrived at Fort St. David, where it found the ships already on the station under the command of Vice-Admiral Griffin. With some

of these ships Griffin now sailed for England; but with those that remained added to those that had come out with him, Boscawen was in command of the greatest marine force that had been seen in India, and with a land force of 5200 men, including 1100 seamen trained to the use of small arms, and 1100 sepoys; and it was hoped that the capture of Pondicherry would compensate us for the loss of Madras, which had been taken by La Bourdonnais two years before.

The enterprise promised well. The troops were in the best of spirits; they were devoted to their chief; and their health was satisfactory, mainly by reason of the hygienic measures taken by Boscawen, more especially in respect of the ventilation of the lower parts of the ships. Boscawen himself commanded on shore; and directing the squadron to blockade the town by sea, he marched the little army from Fort St. David, and on the 11th August arrived in front of Pondicherry.

This was a town of 120,000 inhabitants, defended by a strongly-fortified *enceinte* and several detached forts. The engineers represented that one of these—Aria Coupan—must be taken before the town could be attacked. Ten days were lost over this; and when, by the lucky explosion of a magazine, the enemy were driven hurriedly out of it, instead of attacking the town at once, while "the panic was strong on them," the engineers insisted on the necessity of first repairing the works that had been blown up, to prevent the enemy regaining possession. The siege was then opened in form; but the approaches were slow, and though the rainy season was now close at hand, it was the 26th September before the batteries were ready. Their

fire proved ineffective. The weather was becoming stormy and wet; the men were falling down fast with sickness; and on the 30th Boscawen called a council of war, which resolved that the siege ought to be raised immediately. Two days were spent in re-embarking the guns and material, getting the sick on board the ships, and in destroying Fort Aria Coupan; after which the army retired to Fort St. David; but it had lost, by the enemy and by sickness, 1065 Europeans and a few sepoys. The loss of the French was said to be 250.

Boscawen sent the ships to Acheen and Trincomalee, but he himself remained at Fort St. David, with the army. In November he received news of the cessation of arms, but also orders to remain in India till the signing of the definite treaty of peace. The squadron returned on the coast in January, and in April was, for the most part, at Trincomalee, when on the evening of the 12th a terrific storm—such as is now known as a cyclone—burst on the coast. All the ships at Madras were destroyed. Boscawen's flagship, the Namur, foundered with the loss of 600 men; Boscawen himself, the captain, and a few other officers were luckily on shore. The Pembroke was driven ashore and lost, with almost all her men—upwards of 300. Two East India Company's ships were also wrecked, but their men were saved. The Tartar and Deal Castle, frigates, and the Swallow sloop, being at sea, did not feel the full violence of the hurricane, though they too were dismasted and in imminent peril. At Trincomalee the storm was not felt. In October Boscawen sailed for England, where he arrived in April 1750.

The failure of the attack on Pondicherry was immedi-

ately due to the engineers, Boscawen having been instructed to be guided by their opinions. That they were pedantic and ignorant was universally admitted. They lost valuable time in the attack of the insignificant fort, Aria Coupan, and made their approaches to the town where the inundations were certain to render success impossible. It was said that had they attacked on the north side, there were no inundations to apprehend, and the approaches could have been carried close up to the walls, while much labour would have been saved by the supplies from the fleet being landed nearer to the camp.

As at Cartagena, so at Pondicherry, the engineers attacked according to rule, with little regard to the existing conditions, and none at all to the time at their disposal before the change of season would put an end to the operations. Vernon had no authority over the engineers, but had freely expressed his opinion of their ignorance and stupidity, and the failure had been attributed to his want of temper. Boscawen had been given the authority, but had, at the same time, been ordered to be guided by their opinion. It was a distinction without a difference, and the result was the same. Neither Boscawen's courtesy nor Vernon's denunciations could impart knowledge or energy to men who had neither training nor experience; and the real blame of the failure at Pondicherry, as at Cartagena, lies on the ministry and the parliament, who would seem to have supposed that competent engineers and a disciplined army could be created by the mere word of command.[1]

[1] [Such training as was then given to engineers would seem to have deprived them of the common-sense and capacity for individual action

But whatever was the cause of the failure at Pondicherry, it does not seem to have in any way injured Boscawen's reputation, all the special naval work, including that of landing heavy material, and re-embarking it on the surf-bound coast of Coromandel, having been admirably done. Before leaving the subject of Boscawen's failure at Pondicherry, one is tempted to moralize on the strength and weakness of sea power, which, on the one hand, though Boscawen was supreme at sea, was not sufficient to ensure the capture of a fortress; but, on the other hand, it enabled him to attack and withdraw at will; and Captain Mahan[1] reminds us that the difficulty felt by the French at this time in reinforcing their distant possessions was the principal cause of their anxiety for peace, and of their readiness to surrender Madras at its conclusion.

Since June 1741 Boscawen had represented Truro in parliament, and in June 1751 he became a member of the board of admiralty under Anson. In accordance with the custom of those days he retained his seat on the board till his death. Though there was peace in Europe the war had been continued in America, and in 1755 strong reinforcements of troops were sent out from Brest, escorted by a fleet of 25 sail of the line, nine of which, however, returned to France; the remainder under M. de la Mothe proceeding to Louisbourg and Quebec.

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which Englishmen, thrown on their own resources, have generally displayed; and to have rendered them unable to take into consideration any conditions not provided for by "the book"; especially, at both Cartagena and Pondicherry, the proximity of the wet season. Half-a-century later, Nelson's experiences of the engineer officers of his day were very similar to those of Vernon and of Boscawen.]

[1] *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, p. 310.

On the 4th February, 1755, Boscawen, who had been advanced to the rank of vice-admiral, was appointed to command a fleet of eleven sail of the line; and with this, and having two regiments on board, he sailed from Spithead on the 27th April, his orders being to protect the British colonies in America, and to attack the French fleet wherever he found it. These instructions were duly communicated to M. de Mirepoix, the French ambassador, who replied that "the king his master would consider the first gun fired on the sea in a hostile manner to be a declaration of war."

Shortly after Boscawen had sailed, information having been received of the superior strength of the French fleet, a reinforcement of six sail of the line was sent to join him, and a junction was fortunately effected on the 21st June off the banks of Newfoundland, but not before a collision had taken place. Notwithstanding his inferiority of force, Boscawen did his best to intercept the French fleet, and on the 6th June he fell in with it and chased; but a thick fog coming on, he lost sight of it. On the 8th, however, he fell in with three of the French ships, and captured two of them; the third escaped in a fog. The rest of the French fleet got safely to Quebec, and the British ships becoming unhealthy by "a putrid or jail fever," Boscawen put into Halifax, where he landed his sick, but the virulence of the disease did not abate, and the fleet sailed for England, arriving at Spithead on the 14th November, having lost upwards of 2000 men. M. de la Mothe also returned to Europe, making a circuitous course to avoid Hawke, who had been sent out with orders to intercept him.

Notwithstanding this capture of French ships, and M. de Mirepoix's defiant attitude, war was not declared by the French till a year later, as it was their policy to take advantage of a nominal state of peace to send reinforcements to their colonies, which their experience in the last war had shown to be very difficult as long as the war lasted. War was eventually declared on the 18th May, 1756.

The year 1756 was marked by the attack and capture of Minorca by the French, and by the failure of Admiral Byng to relieve it, giving rise to the celebrated court-martial, and the stormy debates and discussions which followed in the House of Commons. The sentence of the court-martial was death, though accompanied by a recommendation to mercy; but it was nevertheless carried out; and Byng was shot on the quarter-deck of the Monarch on the 14th March, 1757.

The tragic fate of Byng formed the subject of much discussion at the time; it has often been discussed since; and many of our historians have condemned the execution as a judicial murder. If it was so, it must be considered a blot on Boscawen's fair fame, for he was emphatically a consenting party to the trial and to the execution. He was a member of the board of admiralty, and as such he signed Byng's instructions on the 30th March, 1756. He signed the order for the court-martial on the 14th December following; and as commander-in-chief at Portsmouth, he signed the immediate order for the execution, on the 14th March, 1757. Byng, as most of the superior officers of the navy, was a member of the House of Commons; and it fell to Boscawen to inform the House on the 3rd December, "that the king and the board of admiralty,

being dissatisfied with the conduct of Admiral Byng . . . he, the said admiral, is now in custody in order to be tried."

Party feeling at the time ran exceedingly high, and it was passionately maintained that the administration, of which the Duke of Newcastle was the head, and Anson the first lord of the admiralty, had been very remiss. There is no doubt that influences were at work to throw as much blame as possible on the unfortunate Byng, while, perhaps, he suffered nearly as much from the violent partisanship of his friends. But even if we fully admit the *lâches* of the government, they should not be allowed to obscure the issue which the court-martial had to consider, and the verdict which I have quoted is too clearly in accord with the facts to be disputed.

Admitting that the fleet under Byng's command was ill-manned and indifferently equipped, it will be remembered what Hawke, with his crew of "poor puny fellows" in the Berwick, effected in Mathews' action; and in this very engagement, West's division was more than able to hold its own with the ships it engaged. Macaulay has asserted that the punishment of the admiral "was unjust and absurd"; but it did not appear so to many of Byng's contemporaries. The king, who cannot be counted as a partisan of Newcastle's, refused to commute the sentence, though asked to do so by Pitt; and Berkenhout, a very painstaking and impartial writer, summing up the evidence, comes to the conclusion that Byng was "constitutionally deficient in personal intrepidity," and expresses himself 'satisfied in regard to the justice of the execution." His private letters give us reason to believe that Boscawen was

honestly of the same opinion. Horace Walpole tells us, on hearsay, that before the verdict, Boscawen said bluntly, "Well, say what you will, *we* shall have a majority, and he will be condemned." This sounds indecent; but though Walpole's gossip is not, by any means, to be implicitly relied on, it is not improbable that Boscawen was in favour of a conviction; it may well be that "to him, schooled by disasters arising out of criminal ignorance and negligence, death appeared the just reward of conduct such as that of which Byng had been found guilty."[1]

The judgment here formed may seem unfair, when, as is well known, the unfortunate admiral heard his sentence with calmness and resolution, and met his fate with fortitude; but there is a broad distinction between a passive courage in facing death, which is often shown by unwarlike races,[2] and that more active form of affronting danger which leads to victory.

After Boscawen's return from America in 1755, he was employed in command of a squadron in the Channel, off Brest, or in the Bay of Biscay, while at other times he was sitting at the admiralty. In 1756, as we have seen, he was in the House of Commons; and early in the following year he was acting as commander-in-chief at Portsmouth at the time of Byng's execution. It was not then the custom to appoint a permanent commander-in-chief at Portsmouth, and we have already seen Hawke acting in that capacity in the intervals between cruising at sea.

In October 1757 Boscawen was employed as second in command of the "Grand Fleet" under Hawke; and on

[1] *Dictionary of National Biography.*

[2] [Notably by the Chinese.]

the 8th February, 1758, being advanced to the rank of admiral of the blue, he was appointed commander-in-chief of the fleet fitting out for the capture of Louisbourg. He sailed from St. Helens, with some transports carrying 2500 troops under the command of Brigadier-General Wolfe, on the 18th February, and was in command of the whole force until he was joined by Major-General Amherst, off Halifax, on the 28th May; on which day the fleet of 157 sail, and an army of 14,000 men, had left that port for Cape Breton.

It is not necessary to give a detailed account of the operations against Louisbourg; but it is evident that the success of the expedition was largely due to the energetic assistance afforded by the admiral. Notwithstanding bad weather and numerous difficulties which caused timorous counsellors to advise a council of war, he determined to land the troops. On the 8th June, after some defending forts had been cannonaded by the frigates and sloops, Wolfe landed in Gabarus Bay, though the surf was so violent that no less than seventy boats were stove, and many men drowned; notwithstanding which the defences were stormed, and the siege commenced. Marines were landed from the fleet; and throughout the operations for the reduction of the fortress, Boscawen was active with his advice and assistance. On the 21st July, three of the enemy's line-of-battleships in the harbour having been set on fire and destroyed by shell from our batteries, he determined to attack the two remaining ships; and this was successfully accomplished on the night of the 25th by the boats of the fleet; the Prudent of 74 guns being set on fire, and the Bienfaisant of 64 triumphantly towed out.

On the following day, when Boscawen was preparing to follow up this success by sending six ships into the harbour, the Chevalier Ducour, the French commander, sent, offering to surrender on the terms given to the British at Minorca; but this was refused, and the fortress capitulated unconditionally.

Boscawen returned to England on the 1st November, Wolfe accompanying him in the Namur. On appearing in the House of Commons on the 12th December, the Speaker conveyed to him the thanks of the House. Boscawen replied in very few words, acknowledging the compliment, and saying that he was "happy in having been able to do his duty." At a time when miscarriages so frequently occurred through jealousy between the naval and military commanders, it is to the credit of the chiefs of the expedition that "the three leaders all were influenced by the same motive,—their duty to their country; and this was the tie which bound together Boscawen, full of expedients; Amherst, careful and prudent; and Wolfe, prompt, adventurous, and untiring."[1]

It may seem that the service rendered by the navy in the capture of Louisbourg was secondary, as the brunt of the fighting was borne by the military forces; but in reality the sea-power was all-important. The landing was effected under the guns of the navy, and by the navy; and by the navy the French naval force of five sail of the line and three frigates was paralyzed, and reinforcement by sea rendered impossible.[2] Finally, at the right time, the

[1] Wright's *Life of Major-General Wolfe*, p. 458.

[2] [It was not only by Boscawen at Louisbourg that reinforcement was rendered impossible. Of two squadrons fitted out for the purpose at

destruction or capture of the remaining two French ships was effected by the boats of the British squadron, and the threat of attack by sea in aid of that by land resulted in the surrender.

It had its counterpart in the operations at Wei-hai-wei in the recent war between China and Japan, where, again, the principal loss was in the land operations, but where Ito, the Japanese admiral, actively assisted by successful torpedo attacks, which so harassed the Chinese ships, that those not actually sunk were mobbed together under the Island of Liu-kung-tau, and unable to act offensively with effect. Undoubtedly in both cases the capture of the fortress was due even more to sea than to land power; though it was often what Captain Mahan has called a "silent influence," and not so decidedly in evidence as the operations of the land forces.

On the 2nd February, 1759, Boscawen was sworn a member of the Privy Council. In that year the *annus mirabilis* of so many British triumphs, the new French minister, the Duc de Choiseul, determined on a strenuous attempt to bring the war to a conclusion by the invasion of England, Ireland, and Scotland. A fleet of twelve sail of the line under M. de la Clue was got ready at Toulon, which was intended to join M. de Conflans, who commanded the fleet at Brest; and the combined fleets were then to cover the invasion of England. Under Pitt's energetic supervision,

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Toulon, one had been destroyed near Cartagena in February, and the others driven back, by the force under Admiral Osborn. How Hawke treated the squadron similarly fitted out at Rochefort has already been told. See *ante*, p. 223. This is a marked instance of the wide-reaching nature of sea-power. The siege of Louisbourg was being carried on in the Mediterranean and in the Bay of Biscay.]

every endeavour was made to frustrate this scheme by naval combinations. Nor was his dependence on maritime power disappointed. Hawke, with a fleet of twenty-five sail of the line, kept watch off Brest, and in the Bay of Biscay. Boscawen, with three sail of the line and two frigates, sailed from St. Helens on the 14th April for the Mediterranean, to reinforce Vice-Admiral Brodrick and blockade M. de la Clue in Toulon. On the 16th May he effected a junction with Brodrick off Cape Sicie, his fleet then consisting of fourteen sail of the line.

On the 7th June, Boscawen, who, like Nelson under similar circumstances, was making every effort to force on an action, succeeded in cutting off two French frigates from Toulon; and as they had anchored in an adjoining bay under the shelter of some batteries, he detached three line-of-battleships to capture or destroy them. Owing, however, to the failure of the wind, the British ships were unable to act with effect, and they were recalled, but not before they had received considerable damage from the French batteries. Boscawen, however, continued before the port till towards the end of July, when, the squadron being short of provisions, he proceeded to Gibraltar, and anchored there on the 14th August. Here he set to work to repair and revictual his ships, leaving his two frigates looking out—the Lyme off Malaga, the Gibraltar at the entrance of the Straits.

At half-past seven in the evening of the 17th August, the Gibraltar came in under a press of sail, signalling that the French fleet, of twelve ships of the line, was in sight. The English ships were refitting, some with topmasts down; the Namur, Boscawen's flagship, with sails unbent;

but there was not a moment's delay, and within two hours and a half, all the ships were out of the bay.

At daylight the next morning, De la Clue was sighted ahead, but with only seven ships; the other five had separated from him during the night, and were not to be seen. The English ships were also divided, Brodrick's division being some leagues astern; but the signal for a general chase was made, and it closed rapidly, bringing an easterly wind with it. At half-past one Boscawen made the signal to engage, and the action commenced between the Culloden and the enemy's sternmost ship, the Centaure, commanded by M. de Sabran. The Culloden was closely followed by the America, Portland, Guernsey, and Warspite; but the breeze which had brought up the British ships, gradually fell as the French line was reached, and it was not till four o'clock that Boscawen in the Namur came into action with the three sternmost French ships, signalling to his ships, as he closed, to push on ahead and engage the enemy's van. At half-past four, the Namur got alongside the Ocean; but after half-an-hour's action, having lost her mizen mast and two topsail-yards by the French flagship's fire, she was disabled and dropped astern.

Boscawen then hoisted his flag in the Newark, and De la Clue, taking advantage of the delay caused by the disaster which had befallen the Namur, made sail ahead and endeavoured to get away. The Centaure, after a brilliant defence, having lost her fore and main topmasts, and being much damaged, was forced to strike.

It was now dark, but the pursuit was continued during the night. At daybreak on the 19th, only four of the enemy's ships were in sight, two having altered course in

the night and escaped. The English ships were close astern, and M. de la Clue, as a last resource, made for the Bay of Lagos in Portugal, where the Ocean was run ashore, her masts, which had been badly wounded, falling as she struck. De la Clue himself landed with some of the crew, and died shortly afterwards of wounds received in the action. The ship fired a few shot, and struck to the America; she was destroyed, after her captain and the men remaining on board had been removed. The other three French ships—the Téméraire, Modeste, and Redoutable—anchored in the bay and were forced to surrender; but the Redoutable was bilged, and so much damaged that she also was set on fire.

This concluded the action. Boscawen with the greater part of his fleet and his three prizes proceeded to England, where he was honourably received by the king; was sworn a member of the Privy Council, and appointed general of marines, with a salary of £2000 a year. Two of his captains were also knighted. The French ships which had escaped reached Cadiz, where they were blockaded by Vice-Admiral Brodrick who had again assumed command on Boscawen's sailing for England; so that as the result of the action, the Toulon squadron was unable to render any assistance to Conflans, who in the November following was signally defeated by Hawke in Quiberon Bay.

Naturally the flagrant breach of international law shown in completing the destruction of the French ships, by following them into the neutral waters of Lagos, was much dwelt upon, especially by our enemies, and calls for some remarks; but I propose first to consider the action itself and Boscawen's conduct of it.

The promptness and seamanship shown in weighing at night from Gibraltar, with his ships under refit, afforded a memorable example of decision, energy, and "smartness." It was no easy matter with the imperfect signals of those days, to convey the admiral's orders; yet there was no mistake or misunderstanding; the captains had confidence in their chief, and would understand him *à demi mot*, to use Jurien de la Gravière's expressive phrase. Those who know the Rock, and the eddies and "willie-waws" caused by an easterly wind, will best appreciate the difficulties which had to be overcome by sailing ships. Yet it was the British ships, which had put to sea hurriedly and under such unfavourable conditions, which formed a united fleet in the action, while the French ships which had entered the Gut together got separated. It was thus the superior seamanship and discipline of the British which ensured the victory.

From the greater individual strength of the French ships, the fleets were not unequal, and at nightfall on the 17th the French had much the advantage of position; but on the following morning the tables were turned. The uncertainty of the wind and the stubborn defence of the Centaure, which did not surrender till she had lost her captain and 200 men, saved two of the French ships; but the victory was sufficiently complete to ensure the attainment of Boscawen's main object, the preventing the junction of the French fleets.

Boscawen was not entirely satisfied with the conduct of all his captains, considering that more endeavour should have been made to attack the French van. He was reported to have said—"It was well, but it might have been a great

deal better." It appears, however, that the wind died away as the action began, and that thus some of the ships could not possibly get up. It is also pretty clear that the French ships aimed chiefly at the masts of their opponents in the endeavour to escape, as the victory was obtained with the loss of only 56 men killed on the British side.

A few words must be said on the breach of neutrality. It is easy for writers on international law to insist on the absolute security which neutral waters ought to give against belligerent action; but even jurists have not been entirely agreed on this point in such cases as the one we are considering; and it is pertinent to remark that under analogous circumstances on land, a beaten force escaping into neutral territory is disarmed; as was done by Belgium and Switzerland after the Sedan catastrophe, and Bourbaki's failure. Where the neutral power is unable or unwilling to effect this, and to force respect for its neutrality, the stronger naval power will be unlikely to heed the somewhat nebulous hypothesis of irresponsible writers on international law.

In the recent life of Sir George Tryon by Rear-Admiral FitzGerald, there is a letter from Sir George when commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean, to the director of naval intelligence, which is worth quoting as bearing on this case, if indeed he had not Lagos in his mind when he wrote it.

Tryon's question is as follows—

"A and B are at war; C is neutral. Territorial waters extend three miles from the shore. A squadron belonging to A, sights a squadron belonging to B, that is much inferior, and is steaming along the land one mile distant

from it. B desires not to fight; A desires to go at B; C has no force present or near. Where is the law clearly defined? I don't ask what would happen."

His biographer says truly that—

"it is not unlikely that the power and ability of the neutral to take ultimate revenge for the breach of his territorial neutrality, as well as the diplomatic relations (an unknown factor) between the neutral and the two belligerents respectively, would be powerful guides as to what would happen."

The case as put by Tryon is however far less strong, than when, as at Lagos, the inferior squadron has been engaged, and, after being badly beaten, has put into neutral waters to escape capture, while the pursuing force, if the neutral waters are respected, sees its foe escape after a hot action in which many of their number have fallen.[1] But whatever may be the opinion of international jurists with reference to the disregard of Portuguese neutrality shown by Boscawen, it is of little personal interest, as his conduct was fully approved by the English Government.

The memorable action off Lagos was a fitting close to Boscawen's active career, though after Hawke's victory, he relieved that distinguished admiral in command of the fleet in Quiberon Bay, where he felt himself so secure that he took possession of a small island near the river Vannes,

[1] Space forbids this interesting subject being followed further. Recent instances, though in two of them only single ships were concerned, occurred in the Sleswig-Holstein war, in the Franco-German war, and in the American war of secession. In the two former, neutral waters were respected, the neutral power being Great Britain; in the last, they afforded no protection, the neutral power being Brazil.

which was cultivated as a vegetable garden for the use of the sick. This was his last service ; Hawke again relieved him in August 1760, and he proceeded to England.

"He died on the 10th January, 1761, after a short attack of bilious or perhaps what is now called typhoid fever, at Hatchlands Park in Surrey, a seat which, in the words of his epitaph, he had just finished at the expense of the enemies of his country. He was buried in the Parish Church of St. Michael, Penkivel, in Cornwall, where there is a handsome monument to his memory, inscribed by 'his once happy wife,' as an unequal testimony of his worth and of her affection." [1]

He married, in 1742, Frances, daughter of William Evelyn Glanville of St. Clair, Kent, spoken of as "the accomplished Mrs. Boscawen," and by her had three sons and two daughters ; the third son, George Evelyn, succeeded his uncle as third Viscount Falmouth. His widow, for many years a distinguished figure in London society, survived till 1805.

The portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds,[2] here reproduced, calls attention to the fact, which now seems so strange, that an officer of Boscawen's distinction had neither title nor order. The explanation is that the son of a viscount took precedence over both baronet and knight of the Bath ; and the making Boscawen either one or the other would have been then considered a lowering of his social rank. A similar but more strongly-marked case occurred after the

[1] *Dictionary of National Biography.*

[2] The original painting belongs to Lord Falmouth. A replica is in the National Portrait Gallery : a copy is in the Painted Hall at Greenwich.

battle of St. Vincent, nearly forty years later, when Vice-Admiral Charles Thompson, the second in command, and Rear-Admiral William Parker, the fourth in command, were made baronets, and Commodore Horatio Nelson, the fifth in command, was made a K.B.; but the third in command, Vice-Admiral Waldegrave, a son of Earl Waldegrave, was left unrewarded at the time, though three years later he was made an Irish peer, as Lord Radstock.

Boscawen is said to have had a warm temper, and Horace Walpole calls him "the most obstinate of an obstinate family"; but he was much beloved by the seamen who had served with him, by whom he was familiarly known as "old Dreadnought," from his first command. When he died, every man in the ship in which he had been recently serving, "felt the admiral's death as his own peculiar misfortune." That he had earned their affection is shown by his care for their health and comforts, and his enlightened views on the necessity for ventilation, which seems to have been entirely ignored in the earlier period of his service. But at Cartagena, at Pondicherry, and at Halifax he had seen the disastrous effects of sickness, and both his officerlike desire for efficiency, and his kindly nature urged him to make hygiene a study.

In private life he seems to have been a devoted husband, as shown by his letters to his wife, which have been preserved by the family; and in every relation of life he was a character to be admired. Even more than Hawke he was the popular hero; and Beatson, a writer of the century, not given to indiscriminate or exaggerated eulogy, has recorded that—

"Consummate skill in his profession; the most scrupulous fidelity which spurns at peculation; unbounded zeal, and the most cool, collected, and persevering courage, are some of the qualities which rendered Admiral Boscawen one of the greatest naval characters this island ever produced."

Of his courage I have spoken previously. The following story, whether true or not, undoubtedly illustrates the popular idea of it. It is said that while serving in the Dreadnought "the officer of the watch called him one night, saying—'There are two large ships, sir, which look like Frenchmen, bearing down upon us. What are we to do?' 'Do?' answered Boscawen, turning out and going on deck in his night-shirt. 'Do? Damn 'em, fight 'em.'" Such was Boscawen the man. As a disciplinarian his views were undoubtedly severe. Writing, only six months before his death, about the accommodation of the Torbay, a ship which was said to be very cramped, though it had borne his flag in America, he objects to canvas cabins, which Keppel had allowed to be built, stating that in his time "all the officers hung in swinging cots, and were stowed with conveniency." He grounded this objection to cabins on a circumstance which had occurred in the Dreadnought when he commanded her; "he had been chased," he said, "by thirteen French ships, and on the cabins being taken down to bring the stern guns into action, the men got at much bottled liquor, and were so drunk as to be unable to do their duty."

Enough has been said in this paper to show that Boscawen's character and services had fairly earned for him the highest reputation as a naval officer. He was the worthy rival of Hawke; and though there were other

distinguished men, such as Saunders and Pocock, there is no doubt that Hawke and Boscawen stood out prominently as the most able and trusted naval commanders of the period in which they lived. If Hawke was George II's "own captain," Boscawen was Pitt's "great admiral," the latter saying to him—"When I apply to other officers, respecting any expedition I may chance to project, they always make difficulties, *you* always find expedients." He was certainly many-sided, "full of expedients," prompt in decision, and not afraid of responsibility. He never however commanded in a fleet action except that near Gibraltar, when by his own skill and decision, and De la Clue's remissness, he was in very superior force.

It would be specially interesting did we know his views of conducting a fleet action against an enemy of equal force; but he has left no record, and he certainly was never tried as Hawke was at Quiberon. That he would have acted with boldness and decision we cannot doubt; but if we attempt to have a nearer insight into his qualifications, it seems that he had scarcely the same faculty of ensuring success with which Hawke was so richly endowed. More adventurous and enterprising than his rival, he was less safe, and his power of grasping the small details necessary to ensure the attainment of the end in view may be doubted. He was much liked, but his captains do not seem to have had the same implicit reliance on his judgment that Hawke inspired. He was not so uniformly successful, and there is no record of the crushing nature of his blows, such as those delivered by Hawke in the Berwick and other ships which he commanded, or which carried his flag.

The two men were a fitting complement to each other, and Boscawen stands so high among the naval heroes of England, that it is almost invidious to place him in any but the first position; but historical truth forces me to the conclusion that notwithstanding his great reputation, and though he had a character peculiarly his own, he must rank with Howe, Hood, and perhaps Rodney, but below Hawke as a naval commander. It is of moment to add that these two distinguished men, though very unlike in character, were alike in the exemplary nature of their private lives; and, as their replies to the votes of thanks of the House of Commons showed, both were imbued by the patriotic virtue of "duty" to their country; their brilliant services were untainted by greed for prize-money or self-interest.

In no period of our history has the sea power of England been more triumphant and fruitful than in that which we have had before us in the times of Hawke and Boscawen; its pressure was felt alike in the plains of Hindostan and in the wilds of North America, and ensured our ultimate success; while through its influence our island home was unpolluted by the presence of a foreign foe. Before the war closed, Pondicherry and Quebec, Havana and Manila, left without support from Europe, fell to British arms; and though our ships were often ill-equipped, and dependent on the fickle winds, these successes were the direct result of maritime power. But even in those days, this was inadequately appreciated, and twenty years later we lost our American colonies through the navy having been allowed to fall so low as to be unequal to meeting the combined forces of France and Spain.

There has been and there still is a dangerous ignorance of the importance of sea power, which modern historians seem to consider to "come by nature," as Dogberry thought writing and reading did; so that while they can find space for the minor details of our continental wars which were of small importance, they have been content to sum up our naval successes in a few words, as if they only affected our prestige or commerce. Mr. Lecky, who deals with this period, never even mentions Quiberon Bay or Lagos by name, though he has space to refer to the unimportant captures of Goree and Senegal. He is content to allude to "the succession of naval victories by Hawke, Boscawen, and Pocock who captured or destroyed nine-tenths of the ships of war of France, while her commerce was swept by innumerable privateers from every sea." When this is the view of the trusted historian of the eighteenth century, it is no wonder that the works of Captain Mahan came almost as a revelation to the maritime powers of Europe; and I shall be content if in this record of two distinguished naval officers, I have aided, however slightly, in awaking this country to a fuller recognition of the necessity for maintaining intact our national heritage—"The command of the sea."

RODNEY

RODNEY.

VIII

LORD RODNEY

THE family from which George Brydges Rodney, first Lord Rodney, was descended, was one of considerable antiquity, but of no historical distinction. The estate of Stoke Rodney in Somersetshire had come down from father to son, in the direct male line, from the time of Henry III to that of Charles II, when the death of Sir Edward Rodney, at an age verging on 100, broke the line of succession. Sir Edward's sons had predeceased him, and Stoke Rodney was left to a daughter who had married Sir Thomas Brydges of Keynsham, through whom it came, later on, to the Duke of Chandos. Sir Edward's younger brother, George, had two sons, George and Anthony, both of whom served in the marines. George died in 1700; Anthony was killed in a duel at Barcelona in 1705. Anthony's son, Henry, who also served with the marines in Spain, was the father of George Brydges Rodney, who was baptized in the church of St. Giles in the Fields, London, on the 13th February, 1719. It has been said that the king, George I, and the Duke of Chandos were his godfathers, and that from them he derived his Christian names. This, however, is doubtful. It has been seen that

George was a common name in the family, and he is said to have been brought up from infancy by George Brydges of Keynsham, who may not improbably have been his godfather.

His mother's sister had married Lord Aubrey Beauclerk,[1] a captain in the navy, and it was probably through his interest that the youngster was sent to sea in July 1732 as a "king's letter boy." For the next seven years he served continuously in the Western squadron — that is, the Channel fleet—which he used afterwards to speak of as the best school for officers. It was, in fact, the only pretence of a fleet which was kept up in time of peace. In July 1739 he joined the Somerset, flagship of Rear-Admiral Haddock off Cadiz, and by him was promoted, or, in the language of the day, was "made an officer" in October. At that time, and indeed till the end of the century, no one under the rank of lieutenant was considered an officer. Midshipmen and master's mates were "petty officers," who might be gentlemen by birth and breeding, but who more commonly were not.

In 1740 the young lieutenant served in the Dolphin frigate and in the Weymouth, with his uncle, Lord Aubrey, who afterwards went out to the West Indies in command of the Prince Frederick, and was killed at Cartagena on the 22nd March, 1741. In 1741 Rodney was in the Essex, one of the Western squadron; and in 1742 he went out to the Mediterranean in the Namur, the flagship of Admiral Mathews, by whom, on the 9th November, he was pro-

[1] [A younger brother of Lord Vere Beauclerk, so long a member of the board of admiralty (cf. *ante*, pp. 181, 185); not by any means a bad sort of connection for a naval officer in the middle of the eighteenth century.]

moted to be captain of the 60-gun ship Plymouth, and sent to England in charge of a convoy of 300 sail. For this service he received the thanks of the merchants and confirmation of his rank by the admiralty.

From 1743 to 1745 he commanded, first the Sheerness of 20 guns, and afterwards the Ludlow Castle of 40, mostly in the North Sea under Admiral Vernon, helping to patrol the coast of Scotland during the Jacobite rising of 1745. In December 1745 he was appointed to the Eagle of 60 guns, and in her he had the good fortune to come in for some of the happy events which put an end to the war of the Austrian Succession.

In the spring of 1747 he was sent in a squadron under the orders of Captain Fox, to intercept a French convoy, escorted by four men-of-war, which, reversing the usual order of convoy, saved themselves at the sacrifice of their charge. Forty-eight merchantmen of 16,051 tons, in the aggregate, were taken, and being laden with West Indian produce, proved extremely rich prizes. The flag-share alone—though no flag was present—amounted to upwards of £90,000.

In October he was with the fleet under Hawke, which defeated the French squadron under M. de l'Etenduère on the 14th.[1] The Eagle's share in the action was particularly brilliant; but Rodney afterwards complained that he had not been properly supported by Captain Fox of the Kent. Fox was accordingly tried by court-martial and dismissed his ship; but as it appeared that his fault was due to the weakness and defects of age, he was put on the super-annuated list. Complete as the victory was, L'Etenduère's

[1] See *ante*, pp. 215-16.

conduct had been admirable, and, so far as it lay with him, the convoy was saved. A great part of it, however, was picked up by the cruisers in the West Indies, who had been warned by a hasty despatch which Hawke sent off to Commodore (afterwards Admiral Sir George) Pocock, the commander-in-chief at Barbados.

The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748 terminated the war. In March 1749 Rodney was appointed to the Rainbow, with a broad pennant as governor and naval commander-in-chief in Newfoundland—a very important post at that period, when his duties included the preventing settlement on the island, the seeing that the fishing vessels brought back or accounted for every man that left England, and then, as now, the looking after foreign aggressors. He was particularly ordered to keep the ships of war constantly cruising in such way "as may most effectually keep the pirates from those parts, and protect the trade and his Majesty's subjects." At the end of the fishery season, he was to convoy the fishing vessels to the Mediterranean, Spain, Portugal, etc., with the cured fish, and then return to England for the winter, protecting the fishery convoy out to the island next spring. This was certainly commerce under difficulties, very different from the security that now prevails on our "ocean highways." Notwithstanding the peace, aggressions were made by the French in Nova Scotia, a M. Le Corne having brought in a mixed force of 2500 men from Canada, and avowed his intention of remaining.[1] Lord Sandwich,

[1] [History does sometimes repeat itself with very curious exactitude. This present age has seen a very close imitation of M. Le Corne's performance.]

then first lord of the admiralty, accordingly wrote privately to Rodney to the effect that representations had been made to the Court of France, but that as it might be some time before the affair was settled, and as—

"Monsieur Le Corne may still continue his outrages, I think it necessary to inform you if Governor Cornwallis should have occasion to apply to you for succour, it would be approved by government if you should comply with his request. It is judged improper as yet to send any public orders upon a business of so delicate a nature, which is the reason of my writing to you in this manner, and I am satisfied that your prudence is such as will not suffer you to make any injudicious use of the information you now receive. There are some people that cannot be trusted with any but public orders, but I have too good an opinion of you to rank you amongst them, and shall think this important affair entirely safe under your management."

Like all good officers, Rodney was very careful of his men's comforts and health, and he frequently complained to the admiralty of the badness of the provisions, and inadequacy of the clothing supplied in so severe a climate. This was a duty which the condition of the naval departments in the middle of the eighteenth century, called on every captain or admiral to perform. But it was often neglected. The Rainbow was paid off in 1752, at the completion of Rodney's three years, which was then, as it still is, the usual term of command in peace time; a system, which by the constant "change rounds," and the infusion of fresh blood, conduces very materially to the efficiency of the naval service.

After twenty years' hard work at sea Rodney now

obtained a harbour appointment. In 1753 he married Jane,[1] daughter of Charles Compton, brother of the sixth Earl of Northampton, and the Northampton influence made him a man of some political importance. He was already member of parliament for Saltash, a government borough; and the command of a guardship stationary at Portsmouth, rendered his vote available whenever it was wanted. He remained there until the beginning of 1757, assisting in the duties of the port, in fitting out the ships, and in entering seamen, either by press-gangs in London, or by sending on board merchant ships coming from abroad and taking out of them the whole or a great part of the crews; replacing them with "ticket-men," that is men-of-war's men who took the ships to which they were sent into the Thames or other port, and then returned to their own ship. This was unquestionably hard on the merchant seamen—to be thus seized for the service, just as the visions of home and family were on the point of being realized; and it is not to be wondered at that they sometimes resisted. One such case was reported by Rodney to Sir Edward Hawke, then commander-in-chief at Portsmouth. The tender which he had employed on this duty had boarded the ship Britannia from Leghorn to London, off Portland, and had brought back fifteen men; but there had been a stout resistance and three of the Britannia's men had been killed. Hawke took the unfortunate affair very much as a matter of course, and sent Rodney an order to see that the surgeons finished their examin-

[1] She died in 1757, leaving one son, the second Lord Rodney. Rodney married again in 1764, and by his second wife had a large family.

ation of the bodies with the utmost despatch; and continued—

"Then you are without a moment's loss of time to put on board her men in sufficient number and quality to navigate her in safety to her moorings in the river Thames, directing them as soon as they get without St. Helens to throw the dead bodies overboard."

We look with horror on foreign conscripts being taken in chained gangs to supply food for powder and shot; but it was no whit more barbarous than such a system. No wonder that under it, and with bad food, inadequate clothing, and the non-payment of wages, our seamen deserted in shoals. Between 1776 and 1784 we lost 1800 killed or died of wounds received in action; 18,000 died of disease; and 42,000 deserted.

As far as England was concerned, the Seven Years' War began in 1755, though war was not declared till the 18th May, 1756. Boscawen's capture of two French ships in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Hawke's cruise in the Bay of Biscay, and the French attack on Minorca, all happened in what was nominally a time of peace. In February 1757 Rodney was appointed to the Dublin, but did not succeed in getting her manned and ready for sea till September, when she joined the fleet under Hawke in the abortive expedition against Rochefort.[1] In 1758 she was with Boscawen in North America, but, owing to her sickly condition, was generally at Halifax, the base of supplies for the fleet. She rejoined the flag just before the capture of Louisbourg, and returned to England with the convoy that carried the French prisoners.

[1] See *ante*, p. 221.

On the 19th May, 1759, Rodney, then a few months over forty, was made a rear-admiral, and was at once appointed to command a small squadron of line-of-battle ships and frigates, with six bomb vessels. At Havre de Grâce, the enemy had equipped a flotilla of flat-bottomed boats, intended to carry over a military force for the invasion of England. In a bombardment, beginning on the 4th July, and continued for fifty-two hours without intermission, many of these boats were destroyed, and the town itself was so damaged, that, as a military arsenal, it was completely ruined for the remainder of the war; by the vigilant watch he maintained, both coasting and foreign trade was put an end to; and as none of the flat-bottomed boats could escape to other ports, they were sent up to Rouen for security. The loss of the English in this operation was very small, and by its success Rodney "relieved the fears of his countrymen and added greatly to his reputation."

Very few if any naval officers have added to their professional reputation by a parliamentary career, and Rodney was no exception. It was, however, almost a necessity, in that period of gross political jobbery and corruption, for a naval officer of rank to become a party man, not only to further his advancement, but also to defend himself in parliament against party attacks, made in the interest of the party, not of the nation; and if "Rodney stooped somewhat to pick up high command, he exercised it for the good of his country and the confusion of her enemies."[1] In 1761 he was returned to parliament for Penryn, Lord Clive being his fellow member.

[1] Hannay's *Rodney*.

On the 18th October, 1761, he sailed in the Marlborough to take command of the Leeward Islands—as the islands extending from Trinidad to Porto Rico were named—and to reinforce the squadron already there under Commodore Sir James Douglas, who, in co-operation with Lord Rollo, commanding the troops, had captured the Island of Dominica in June. Rodney arrived at Barbados on the 22nd November—a rapid passage for those days. A month later there came a large body of troops from North America, under the command of Major-General Monckton, and joining those already on the station under Lord Rollo, and others sent out from Europe, formed altogether a force of nearly fourteen thousand men, intended for the reduction of Martinique—the most important French possession among the Leeward Islands—from which we had been repulsed in 1759. The fleet, too, was powerful and large, consisting of 14 ships of the line, besides four 50-gun ships and 14 frigates, with sloops, bombs, etc., manned by a total of about eleven thousand men. The troops having been refreshed and all arrangements completed, the expedition arrived off Martinique on the 7th January, 1762. Several important bays and anchorages were occupied by the fleet, and on the 16th the army was landed without the loss of a man. Nine hundred marines were landed from the fleet, and a thousand seamen, the navy playing an important part on shore as well as afloat. Owing to the peculiar nature of the country, considerable difficulty was encountered in laying siege to Fort Royal only four miles distant.

"The whole country was a natural fortification, extremely mountainous in the centre, from whence issued large streams of water; and these on their way to the sea had worn deep

channels, so that the country was intersected by deep ravines, and the fords were very difficult to pass."

Every strong place had also been defended; but all these obstacles were overcome, and on the 4th February the citadel capitulated; on the 12th, the whole island submitted, and the surrender of the remainder of the French Caribbean Islands followed. In his report to the secretary of state the general dwelt on—"the harmony that subsists between the fleet and the army, and the cordial assistance we have received from Admiral Rodney in every part of the operation where his aid could be useful." And Rodney, on his part, wrote—"The most perfect harmony has subsisted between the navy and the army, each vying in the most friendly manner which should serve his Majesty and country best." This is curiously corroborated by a private letter from a military officer to his friends, from which I will give some extracts.

"As soon as all were safely disembarked, our engineers set to work in raising batteries, to cover us in our approaches to dislodge the enemy. For this purpose all the cannon and other warlike stores were landed, and dragged by Jacks to any point thought proper. You may fancy you know the spirit of these fellows. A hundred or two of them with ropes and pulleys will do more than all your dray horses in London. Let but their tackle hold, and they will draw you a cannon or mortar on its proper carriage up to any height, though the weight be never so great. It is droll enough to see them tugging along with a good 24-pounder at their heels; on they go hurraying and hallooing, sometimes up hill, sometimes down hill, now sticking fast in the bushes, presently floundering in the mud and mire; swearing, sinking, and as careless of

everything but the matter committed to their charge, as if death or danger had nothing to do with them. We had a thousand of these brave fellows sent to our assistance by the admiral, and the service they did us both on shore and on the water is incredible."

And such has always been the case, when both chiefs know their work and their duty. When discord arises in combined expeditions, it will generally be found that ignorance and incompetence on one side are contrasted by zeal, knowledge, and energy on the other.[1] The thanks of parliament were given to army and navy for their services.

On the 5th March Rodney received instructions, dated 26th December, 1761, to commence hostilities against the Spanish possessions; and four days later had news that a French squadron of seven sail of the line had been seen to the windward of Martinique. This squadron, carrying a reinforcement of 2000 troops for Martinique, had escaped from Brest in an easterly gale, on the 23rd December; but now, finding that the island had already fallen, it proceeded to San Domingo. It had had a very long passage; but so also had the Aquilon frigate which had been at once sent off by Commodore Spry, then before Brest, to inform Rodney of its escape. Rodney had thus no intelligence of it till it was actually on the coast, and before he could follow it, it was away; but whither, was for several days unknown. When he learned that it had gone to San Domingo, he immediately understood that

[1] [This was especially the case in the notorious failure at Cartagena in 1741. Vernon was an able and energetic officer, whose naturally warm temper was tried beyond bursting point by the sloth and incompetence to which he was shackled.]

Jamaica might be in imminent danger of an attack from the combined forces of France and Spain; and this apprehension was confirmed by letters from the governor, and from Commodore Forrest, who commanded the small squadron at Jamaica.

General Monckton, while fully recognizing the peril of Jamaica, did not consider himself authorized to detach troops thither, without orders from England. Rodney, however, took a more liberal view of his instructions. He considered himself not only authorized but "obliged to succour any of his Majesty's colonies that be in danger," and prepared, as was undoubtedly his duty, to proceed to Jamaica, with the largest portion of his force. As all the Caribbean Islands were now in our possession, a small squadron appeared to be sufficient for his own station.

On the 26th March, however, he received orders from England (dated 5th February), directing him not to prosecute any further designs that he might be contemplating, as a secret expedition was preparing, to which everything else was to give way. This was the expedition which captured Havana; but Rodney, believing that the danger of Jamaica was immediate, sent ten sail of the line there, which, when the pending attack on Havana was known to the Spaniards, joined Sir George Pocock and took part in the siege. Rodney, too, at Martinique, did valuable work in preparation of transports, watering, victualling, etc., for this expedition, of which only a small part had come direct from England, so as to avoid arousing the suspicions of the Spaniards as to its destination.

No event of importance occurred during the remainder of the war, and Rodney returned to England in August

1763. On the 21st January, 1764, he was created a baronet, and on the 23rd November, 1765, was appointed governor of the Royal Hospital at Greenwich. Whilst there he displayed his usual consideration for the comforts of the old pensioners, desiring that when a young sailor visited the Hospital, he might go away saying—"Who would not be a sailor to live as happy as a prince in his old age?" His private life, however, is said to have been very irregular. He was much in society; and fashionable society at that time meant high play. He played, and with expensive runs of bad luck. In the general election of 1768, too, he contested Northampton at a cost of £30,000, which, added to his losses at play, left him with a debt which hung like a millstone round his neck for the rest of his life.

In January 1771 he was appointed to the command of the Jamaica station, and arrived at Port Royal on the 7th August, to find himself involved in a serious dispute with the Governor of Cartagena,[1] which cannot be better described than by the letter which Rodney wrote to him from Jamaica, on the 3rd September—

"I have the honour to acquaint your Excellency, that his Britannic Majesty has been pleased to confer on me the command of his squadron on this station, and to assure you that while I am protecting his Majesty's territories and the trade of his subjects, I shall be truly solicitous to maintain a friendly correspondence with your Excellency and the rest of his Catholic Majesty's governors in America.

[1] The affair had really occurred before Rodney took command of the station. The orders under which the Sir Edward Hawke sailed were those of Rodney's predecessor, Commodore Mackenzie; though, unquestionably, Rodney fully approved of them.

"With such a disposition, judge, Sir, what must have been my astonishment to hear on my arrival, that two guarda costas, under the pretended sanction of your Excellency's and the commodore's orders, had forced his Majesty's schooner, the Hawke, into Cartagena, after they were told and knew whose commission the commander of her had the honour to bear. I am moreover informed that one of the commodore's lieutenants acquainted the commander of the schooner on her dismission from the port of Cartagena, that she might go, but that if either the schooner or any other of his Britannic Majesty's ships were afterwards found within twelve leagues of the coast, they should be taken and their crews imprisoned.

"As your Excellency, I doubt not, is equally disposed with myself to support the harmony which so happily subsists between the two crowns, I cannot be persuaded you have given the least countenance to these acts of violence. The officer who has dishonoured his king's colours by a tacit submission to this insult, has already been dismissed the service; and I have the fullest confidence that your Excellency will, on your part, immediately order the officers that have treated with such indignity the British flag, to be called to the strictest account, and confirm the opinion I would willingly entertain of the impossibility of such a menace being sent by the commodore, or any officer of rank who wishes to preserve the general tranquillity. I have ordered the captain by whom I have sent this to await your Excellency's reply."

Lieutenant Gibbs who commanded the Sir Edward Hawke, was tried by a court-martial, "for disobedience of orders and suffering his Majesty's colours to be insulted and disgraced by two Spanish guarda costas, whom he was prevailed on by threats to accompany into the harbour of Cartagena without making any resistance, notwithstanding his orders were to keep a good look-out that his

Majesty's vessel might not be run into any kind of danger, or his Majesty's colours suffer any disgrace from the insults of guarda costas or otherwise," and was sentenced—"To be dismissed his Majesty's service, during the king's pleasure."

The court certainly did not err on the side of severity. It has been seen that the French commodore, L'Etenduère,[1] sacrificed two-thirds of his squadron to gain time for his convoy to escape; assuredly, the honour of the national flag was of no less importance. Lieutenant Gibbs should have resisted as long as he could without sacrificing his crew, have then struck his colours to superior force, and have refused to rehoist them till atonement was made for the insult.[2]

Rodney's letter is a model of what should be written on such an occasion. It is "firm, dignified, and conciliatory, and would not be unworthy of the reputation of the most skilful diplomatist."[3] It gave the Spaniard clearly to understand that such tame submission would not be repeated; and the sentence of the court-martial remains as a lesson for the guidance of officers who may at any time find themselves in a position of similar difficulty.

It has been asserted that in taking such serious notice of

[1] *Ante*, pp. 215-16.

[2] [The case of the French frigate Résolue in the East Indies, twenty years later, offers some points of comparison and of contrast. She resisted the visit and search of some merchant ships under her convoy, and having lost 68 men killed and wounded, struck her colours to the superior force. As her captain insisted on considering her a prize to the English and refused to rehoist her colours, she was taken to Mahé and there left to herself—Commodore Cornwallis washing his hands of her. At any other time the affair must have led to very serious consequences. As it was, it passed almost without notice.]

[3] Mundy's *Life of Rodney*.

this affair, Rodney was trying to bring on a war with Spain, for his own pecuniary benefit. The idea can only have suggested itself to a mind ignorant of the point of honour; and a careful examination of Rodney's correspondence proves it to be entirely without foundation. No English admiral has ever brought on a war with another country—and one who would do so, for his personal benefit, could not be too severely dealt with. No incident of naval importance occurred during the remainder of Rodney's command, and he returned to England in September 1774.

The year 1778 was a disastrous one for the navy. Keppel's indecisive action with D'Orvilliers, eighty or a hundred miles west of Ushant, led to a series of courts-martial, in which political partisanship was far more considered than the good of the country, and many of our ablest naval officers of rank refused to serve under the ministry then in power,[1] and an admiralty which, in a strong parliament, only escaped censure by 34 votes.

Rodney had fortunately not been mixed up in the business, having been in France for some years. He was, moreover, of the same party as the ministry and was a favourite with the king. He had submitted an admirable plan of carrying on hostilities in the West Indies and North America, for which his previous experience in the West Indies thoroughly qualified him. He particularly dwelt on the fact that, after June, the fear of hurricanes stopped all warlike operations in the West Indies, and that

[1] [Notably Lord Howe and Sir Robert Harland. Admiral Barrington, whose brilliant defence at St. Lucia had marked him as one of the most capable officers of the day, refused to take command of the Channel fleet.]

this was the most favourable period of the year for carrying on hostilities against our revolted American colonies and their allies, the French ; whilst the winter, when the severity of the weather stopped hostilities in North America, was the most favourable season for operations in the West Indies. Consequently, by sending the fleet from the West Indies to North America in July, and the troops from America to the West Indies in November or December, the armed forces might be better utilized than by confining them to their own station in the season when climate forbade any important warlike operations. He also dwelt strongly on the importance of St. Lucia to us for observing the French at Martinique, as well as for its good anchorages and the facilities for fortifying them.[1]

In October 1779 he was appointed commander-in-chief at Barbados and the Leeward Islands. Government was most anxious for him to get to sea and proceed to his important command, relieving Gibraltar—then closely besieged by the Spaniards—on the way. Owing, however, to delays in the dockyards and in victualling, etc.—exceedingly common then and not unknown even now—he did not sail till the 28th December. On the 8th January, 1780, he fell in with a valuable Spanish convoy, under the protection of seven armed vessels of the Caracas Company, all of which

[1] The French had formerly a far more correct appreciation of St. Lucia than we had. In each war we had, as a matter of necessity, to take it, at a heavy cost of blood and treasure ; at the end of each war it was restored, to be retaken by us in the next war. It was not till the end of the Napoleonic war that it was left finally in our hands. But the French diplomatists consult their naval officers ; ours never do ; [and our treaties have frequently been concluded in accordance with the dictates of party jealousy rather than of the needs of the empire.]

were captured; a most fortunate event, as many of the merchant ships were laden with stores for the Spanish fleets at Cadiz and Cartagena, which stood in great need of them.

On the 16th, a Spanish fleet of eleven sail of the line, with smaller vessels, was fallen in with to the south-east of Cape St. Vincent, the Spanish admiral having supposed that Rodney would have parted company and gone on to the West Indies, leaving only an inferior force for him to deal with. On realizing his mistake, he attempted to escape into Cadiz; but this was frustrated by Rodney's making the signal for a general chase, the ships to engage as they came up, and to take the lee gage. The result was a running fight, which began at 4 p.m., was continued through a great part of the night, and did not cease till 2 a.m. on the 17th, when the Monarch, the headmost Spanish ship, struck to Rodney's flagship, the Sandwich. Altogether, six of the Spaniards were captured and one was blown up.

The weather throughout was "tempestuous with a heavy sea." "It continued," wrote Rodney, "very bad next day; several of the ships were in great danger, and under the necessity of making sail to avoid the shoals of St. Lucar, nor did they get into deep water till next morning." He also reported that the Spaniards made a gallant defence. Two of the prizes were wrecked on the lee shore. The English loss was 32 killed and 100 wounded, and considerable damage was sustained by some of the squadron. The relief of Gibraltar and Minorca followed as a matter of course, and Rodney sailed for his command. His great merit had been that—like Hawke in Quiberon Bay—he

had dared both shoals and a lee shore; and the country was naturally elated at finding they had an admiral who, as Lord North said in proposing a vote of thanks to him in the Commons, did not fear "the night, a high wind, and the vicinity of a dangerous shore . . . With these difficulties he had combated, and they serve to enhance the honour of the victory." In addition to the thanks of both Houses of Parliament, the freedom of the City of London was conferred on Rodney; and Lord Sandwich wrote—"I scarcely know how to find words to congratulate you enough on your late glorious successes, and upon the eminent services you have done your country."

Rodney arrived at Barbados about the 18th of March, expecting to be met there by intelligence from the fleet which had been left under the command of Sir Hyde Parker. In this he was disappointed. "Had I found it," he wrote to the admiralty, "I should have joined Rear-Admiral Parker time enough to have prevented" the reinforcement from Brest under the command of the Comte de Guichen getting into Fort Royal of Martinique on the 22nd March. On the 23rd, Guichen, with 22 ships of the line, put to sea, meditating an attack on St. Lucia. Parker had with him only 16 ships, but he took up a strong defensive position in Gros Islet Bay; and Guichen was still considering the advisability of attacking it, when, on the 27th, he had news that Rodney with a reinforcement, the strength of which was greatly exaggerated, was near at hand. He drew back to Fort Royal, and a few hours later Rodney came in.

A vigilant watch was kept by the frigates on the French fleet, and on the 15th April, Rodney had news that it had

gone to sea on the previous night. He immediately sailed in pursuit, and on the 16th caught sight of it 24 miles to leeward of the Pearl Rock of Guadeloupe. On the 17th an indecisive action was fought. It might have been very different had Rodney's intention been carried out, had his signals been obeyed, had even the rest of the fleet followed the example set by him of closing with the enemy. The brunt of the battle was borne by the centre squadron, which had 48 killed and 157 wounded; the van losing 39 killed and 104 wounded; the rear, 33 killed and 101 wounded; and of the centre squadron, the Cornwall and Sandwich lost 39 killed and 100 wounded—certainly a strong confirmation of that portion of Rodney's despatch which for political reasons was suppressed by the government—

"It is with concern inexpressible, mixed with indignation, that the duty I owe my sovereign and country obliges me to acquaint their lordships that during the action with the French fleet on the 17th April, the British flag was not properly supported."

It was unfortunate that Rodney had joined the fleet only nineteen days before he put to sea, and twenty-one before the action was fought, so that he had had but little opportunity of knowing his subordinates, or they of knowing him or understanding his plans and intentions. But how it was Rear-Admiral Parker, who commanded the van, could have allowed his division to get some miles away from his commander-in-chief, who had signalled his intention to attack the enemy's rear, when also the line of battle had been formed two cables apart and never

annulled, is almost inconceivable ; but blunders do happen, even now, in fleets brought together for manœuvres. The only remedy is plenty of sea work to acquire knowledge and eliminate blunders as much as is humanly possible. On this occasion such exercise was more necessary than usual, for Rodney, in signalling to attack the rear of the enemy, was ordering something contrary to the familiar "Fighting Instructions," and not readily understood by those to whom the "Fighting Instructions" were the beginning and the ending of naval tactics.

But whatever difficulty the English captains, or the English rear-admiral had in understanding the intended manœuvre, the French commander-in-chief had none, and, as he saw it, realized the danger in which it would place him ; but an aide-de-camp of the Marquis de Bouillé, the governor of Martinique, who was on board the flagship, cheered him with the exclamation, "Courage, General! the English desert their commander!"

After this action, Rodney went through an admirably organized system of fleet manœuvres, which taught his subordinates that he knew his duty, and was determined all those under him should do theirs ; thereby restoring the sense of naval discipline which had become too much relaxed at that period. Rodney and Guichen met twice afterwards ; but the latter seeing his opponent was a determined fighting man, who had cast himself loose from the trammels of the "Fighting Instructions," never again gave him the chance of the windward position and consequent option of fighting ; nor did he, on his part, though superior in numbers, exercise that option, which he possessed. For several days the fleets were in presence of each other,

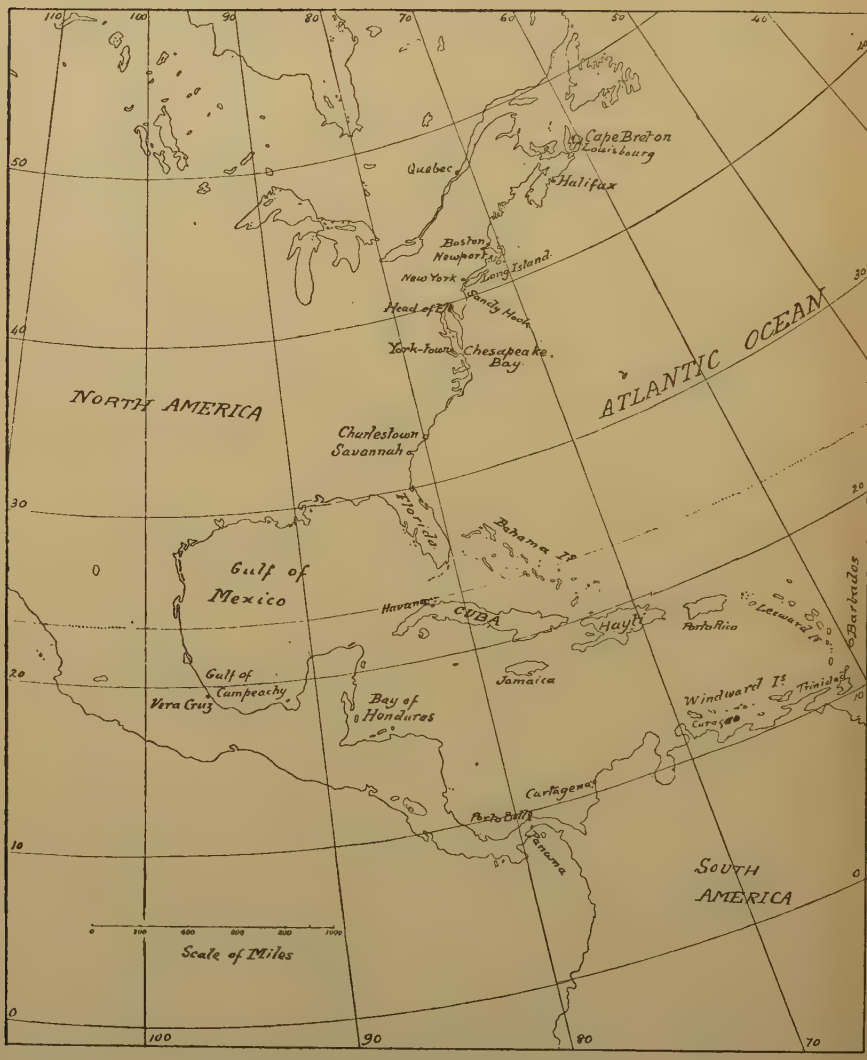
and furnished another proof of the inability of a fleet to leeward to bring on a decisive battle; unless, as Sir John Jervis observed, in speaking of Keppel's action, both commanders-in-chief mean fighting.[1]

Early in June twelve Spanish ships of the line reinforced Guichen, raising the allied fleet to 36 sail of the line, Rodney having only 24. The Spanish ships, however, were exceedingly sickly, and far from strengthening the French were a serious encumbrance. On the 5th July, Guichen accompanied them, or virtually convoyed them to Havana; and after touching at Cape Français, returned to Europe.

On the 12th July Rodney was reinforced by five ships of the line from England, under Commodore Walsingham, and was thus enabled to send home the convoys, to strengthen the squadron at Jamaica, and after providing for the security of his own station during the hurricane months, he left for North America with ten line-of-battle ships, and arrived at New York on the 13th September. He took this step entirely on his own responsibility, and though Vice-Admiral Arbuthnot, who was previously in command at New York, remonstrated strongly and even insolently against it, it was very distinctly approved by the admiralty; and Lord Sandwich wrote to him—

"It is impossible to us to have a superior fleet in every part; and unless our commanders-in-chief will take the great line as you do and consider the king's whole dominion as under your care, our enemies must find us unprepared somewhere and carry their point against us."

[1] [A hundred years earlier this had not been so; and—putting the romantic legends on one side—it was the impossibility of avoiding action that compelled Tourville to attack at Barfleur, as the least of two evils.]



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It is curious that, after this letter, Rodney was not appointed supreme commander-in-chief, for the advantage of unity of command over Jamaica and North America; not to interfere in local work, but to have the power of recalling his own ships if sent to one of the other stations, and of employing the three squadrons to the best advantage. It was done for Pigot, Rodney's incompetent successor. And in case of war, it should certainly be our present policy in China, the Pacific, and in Australia.

The unexpected addition to our fleet in North American waters—

"not only disconcerted the plans of the allies, and terminated the sanguine hopes which they had formed at the opening of the campaign, but placed it in the power of the British to project in security further expeditions to the south." [1]

Washington—who, at a later period, wrote to the Comte de Grasse: "You will have observed that whatever efforts are made by the land armies, the navy must have the casting vote in the present contest"—was in despair at Rodney's arrival, and the non-arrival of Guichen, as he based his whole hope of ultimate success, on

"a constant naval superiority upon these coasts as the object most interesting. This would instantly reduce the enemy to a difficult defensive, for they could not subsist a large force in this country if we had command of the sea."

How deeply impressed Washington was with the sense of the value of sea power, appears on nearly every page of his voluminous correspondence; as when, on the day after the

[1] Marshall's *Life of Washington.*

surrender of York-town, he wrote to De Grasse, the commander of the French fleet, that "the honour of it belongs to your Excellency," and went on to urge further operations in the south; the British, with the loss of their naval superiority had also lost the power of rapid transport of troops and supplies, which was transferred to the Americans; and the previous difficulties of "immense land marches, which subjected us to be beaten in detail," have become the lot of the British. De Grasse however declined any further co-operation that season; on which Washington observed that, beyond doubt the British force in the Carolinas and Georgia would have been extirpated if Count de Grasse could have extended his naval co-operation two months longer; for "no land force can act decisively unless accompanied by a naval superiority."

Rodney sailed for Barbados with sixteen ships of the line on the 16th November, and arrived there on the 5th December. During his absence a fearful hurricane had devastated the West Indies, and done immense damage to the fleet. Several ships were wrecked, and others foundered at sea. There was a great scarcity of naval stores to repair the damage; but Rodney did not stand at trifles, and on the 10th December he was at St. Lucia, planning an expedition with General Vaughan against the French island of St. Vincent, which—it was reported—had its fortifications destroyed by the hurricane and might be taken by a *coup de main*. The expedition failed, as the information was erroneous,—the forts were intact, and only to be reduced by a siege. And so ended the first year of his command, the record of which was very different from that of any other commander-in-chief of the time. He

had shown a seamanship, statesmanship, and fearlessness of responsibility, such as had not been hitherto exhibited in this lamentable war.

Very early in 1781, Rear-Admiral Sir Samuel Hood, who, having kept clear of politics, and the disastrous dissensions produced by the Keppel court-martial, had been specially selected for his second in command, arrived with reinforcements, and much-needed stores to refit the fleet. It does not appear that Rodney had been consulted in the matter, but he knew Hood, who—as a midshipman—had been with him forty years before in the Sheerness and Ludlow Castle, and—as a captain—had served with him off Havre in 1759. He now wrote to him on the 4th January—

"It gives me the highest satisfaction that the admiralty have appointed you to serve with me, as I know no one whatsoever that I should have wished in preference to my old friend Sir Samuel Hood, who I hope will believe me when I assure him that I shall ever be with real truth and sincerity,

"His affectionate and most obedient humble servant."

Three weeks later, both admiral and general received secret orders, dated the 20th December, 1780, to commence hostilities against the Dutch, with a suggestion to capture St. Eustatius and the other Dutch settlements in the West Indies. For the last two years, Holland had been trying "to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds"; to enjoy the benefits of her commercial alliance with England, and of the profitable trade with France, in contraband of war. Her relations with England had been gradually getting very strained, and they parted, when, on the 10th

September, 1780, the draft of a treaty between Holland and England's revolted colonies was found on board a captured packet. All through the past year, Rodney had been fuming at the hostile nature of the Dutch neutrality. Not a moment was now lost; on the 30th January the expedition sailed from St. Lucia, and on the 4th February St. Eustatius capitulated without resistance. "Upwards of 150 merchant vessels of all denominations were taken in the bay;" and a convoy which had left thirty-six hours previous was pursued, captured, and brought back. The Dutch admiral unfortunately lost his life in a vain attempt to protect his convoy against an overwhelming force.

Rodney wrote of St. Eustatius—"It is a vast capture. The whole I have saved for the king and country, and I hope will go to the public revenue. I do not look on myself as entitled to one sixpence of it, nor do I desire it. . . . Had the Dutch been as attentive to their security as they were to their profits, the island had been impregnable." The lesson may be taken to heart by all commercial nations.

Owing to the secrecy of the blow many American and French vessels were captured, with valuable cargoes bound to the Dutch island. The stoppage of the contraband trade was severely felt by France, Holland, and America, and alas! that it should be a fact—also by "certain London and Bermuda firms who had been in the habit of supplying the American privateers with warlike stores;"—traitors to their country and robbers of their countrymen, through whose losses the Americans paid them the exorbitant profit of this nefarious traffic. Traders of all nations and of all times have done the same; as a curious instance

of which, it is told by Esquemeling in his *Lives of the Buccaneers*, how the Spanish merchants came to the Sound of Navergas and traded with them for the plunder of Panama, which they—the buccaneers—had recently sacked, supplying them with "what commodities they needed."

It had been intended after the capture of St. Eustatius to have sent Hood with a squadron and part of the land forces to attack Curaçao, and Rear-Admiral Drake with another part of the naval and military forces, to attack the Dutch settlements on the river Demerara and Essequibo—which would have fallen as easily as St. Eustatius; but apparently well-founded information, received by Rodney from Captain Linzee, that he had fallen in with a French convoy escorted by ten or twelve line-of-battle ships, 150 miles to the northward of Cape Finisterre, steering for the West Indies, caused him to send Hood and Drake, with seventeen line-of-battle ships and five frigates, to cruise off Martinique to intercept this force and blockade Fort Royal, where there were four French sail of the line.

When ordering the capture of St. Eustatius, the government, who were well aware of its importance and wealth, made a grave mistake in not sending out a civil commission to settle the multitudinous affairs and details consequent on its capture, and so relieve the commanders of the armed forces of the heavy responsibility that devolved upon them, to the detriment of their own duty. This is what was done at Toulon and Corsica in 1793–5, and what will, it is to be hoped, be done in similar cases in future wars. Had it been done at St. Eustatius, Rodney's memory would have been saved from much obloquy, and from bitter charges of having, through alleged cupidity,

neglected his duty and subjected the fleet to great hazard, by leaving it divided, to await the arrival of the Comte de Grasse. It cannot be denied that a very heavy responsibility and immense unprofessional duties devolved on both the general and the admiral; duties which they could not transfer to any one else, and which made it necessary for them to be on the spot. The prize money for separate or joint naval and military captures was an easy matter, being settled by law and custom. It was the "vast capture seized for King and State" that gave the trouble; and Rodney was naturally willing to take trouble to punish those who sent "two vessels laden with cordage and naval stores, and many shipwrights to refit Guichen's squadron at the island of Barbuda" after the 17th April, 1780; and by such assistance enabled eight of the French ships, which must have otherwise borne away for San Domingo, to keep company with their fleet. "What will you say when I inform you that English traitors were concerned in this scheme?" he wrote to Commissioner Laforey, at Antigua.

As the king's proclamation resigning his rights in the capture to the armed forces, was dated on the 30th March, it cannot have arrived at St. Eustatius before the middle or the end of May; its receipt was only acknowledged by Rodney and Vaughan on the 25th June "by the earliest opportunity." But long before that date, everything of value had been sent to England under convoy, except the money realized by auction sales, by far the greater part of which remained in the island.

Up to the date of receiving that royal proclamation, Rodney's alleged illegalities were committed for the king

and state; and if the papers he sent home had not been abstracted from the secretary of state's office—most probably for a consideration paid[1]—there is no just reason to doubt that he would have been able to prove his case. But riches, even if obtained traitorously and dishonestly, combined with political influence, are heavy odds to fight against.

When St. Eustatius was recaptured by the French, the money left in the island, to the amount of a quarter of a million, was lost. The agents in charge had been ordered to send it to North America to pay the troops, and they were never brought to book for their neglect. It was never clearly shown what became of it; it was said to have been seized by the French; but the agent refused to give any account of it. Rodney was, naturally, wild with rage; but, as he had written before, that he had made the island impregnable against any enemy except treachery or negligence, it was not to be wondered at that he imputed the capture to these, with cowardice added. Rodney was unquestionably a man who asserted his rights of prize money, etc., to their fullest extent. He was poor, oppressed with debt, and could not afford to do otherwise. In addition, he believed that the British inhabitants of St. Eustatius were traitors and scoundrels, who deserved scourging and should be scourged. The stronger therefore appears a letter to his agents, of the 31st July, 1781, in which he says that—

[1] [Knowing the state of the public service at the time, it is perhaps equally possible that some one—even high in office—was implicated in the iniquities which these papers would have brought into clear light.]

"among the numerous British inhabitants of the Island of St. Eustatius, most of whom have been long carrying on a most treasonable correspondence with the public enemy, a few, and a very few, may have been less guilty of those atrocious practices, and may have legally imported the goods now in their stores from Great Britain. As it is far from my desire that the innocent should suffer with the guilty, I shall be glad to mitigate the rigours of the laws of war, and give it as my opinion that attention should be shown to those merchants who have legally imported their goods directly from Great Britain."

This does not look like the letter of a man determined to take his legal pound of flesh, whatever injury it may cause the innocent, even when, as is evident, they were found in very bad company.

It has generally been supposed that Rodney was aware of the expected arrival of the Comte de Grasse, and consequently, that his proper place was with the fleet, at Martinique. If this had been the case, his conduct would have been most culpable. It appears certain, however, that he was entirely ignorant of it. If he had known it, Hood would have known it, and would have said so in his familiar letters. But writing to his confidential friend, Jackson, on the 21st May, 1781, after describing his action with De Grasse on the 29th April, he continued—

"But is it not surprising that such a squadron with so large a convoy should come upon us without our having the least notice?—for had a small fast-sailing vessel have left England a fortnight after their departure from Brest she must have been here before them."[1]

[1] *Letters written by Sir Samuel Hood* (Navy Records Society, vol. iii.).

The full significance of this is perhaps more clear to a seaman than to a landsman. But Sandwich writing to Rodney on the 8th May, says—

"I much wish that the Swallow and Ranger cutters may have reached you time enough to apprize you of the approach of De Grasse. The false alarm you received from the well-meant, though ill-founded intelligence, sent you by Captain Linzee has, I fear, stopped the career of your conquests, which would otherwise have added Surinam and probably Curaçao to the British dominions. As we are unable to reinforce you, and M. de Grasse will be considerably superior to you, our chief dependence must be placed on the skill of our commander-in-chief, and the bravery of the officers and men under him."

In a previous letter, dated the 21st March, Sandwich had written that the fleet of which Linzee had sent information was certainly D'Estaing's, on its way from Cadiz to Brest, though possibly it was standing out to sea to get a proper offing.

"I hope the intelligence we now send you is better founded, though I own I think it very doubtful where the twenty-five sail now at Brest are destined for. The prevailing and most probable opinion is that they are to go to the West Indies and afterwards to North America; but it is also supposed that they may join the Spanish fleet at Cadiz to dispute Darby's passage to Gibraltar."

The twenty-five ships mentioned were the twenty of De Grasse's squadron, with five more going to the East Indies under the command of M. de Suffren.

The Comte de Grasse left Brest on the next day, the 22nd March, and making a very rapid passage, arrived off

Martinique on the 28th April. The Ranger cutter, mentioned by Sandwich, left England on the 6th April, had a longer passage than the French fleet, and did not fall in with Rodney till the 17th May. De Grasse's arrival with a very superior force was thus a complete surprise to Hood, who had been sent to blockade Martinique against the expected convoy reported by Linzee, to which his force would have been superior. Captain Linzee's false information was, however, very fortunate; for if the Surinam and Curaçao expeditions had been undertaken, the squadrons under Drake and Hood would probably have been still absent; and the fleet, broken into small detachments, might have been destroyed piecemeal. Being concentrated under Hood, with the exception of the two or three ships which Rodney had with him at St. Eustatius, it escaped this danger. The situation was bad enough as it was. But for Linzee's mistake it might have been a good deal worse.

Rodney's first information of De Grasse's arrival, or even of his having sailed from Brest, was by the Russell, one of the ships with Hood in the action of the 29th April, which arrived at St. Eustatius on the 4th May, in a sinking condition, having the water over her magazine platform.

"Upon receiving this news," he wrote two days later, "I instantly despatched the convoys bound to Great Britain, America and Jamaica; in six hours repaired the Russell, sent her to St. Christopher's, to complete her water,"—a very usual cause of delay, which we are apt to forget, now that ships are watered by distilling sea-water—"with orders to join me without a moment's loss of time, and put to sea myself with the Sandwich and Triumph, in order to join the fleet,"—which he did off Antigua.

His letter concludes with an assurance of his determination to lose no time in attacking the enemy, "should they give me an opportunity."

For the moment, however, De Grasse's superiority in the neighbourhood of Martinique was established, and on the 9th May he convoyed the Marquis de Bouillé with a land force of some 1500 men, to attempt the reduction of St. Lucia; but the fleet, anchoring in Gros Islet Bay, was quickly driven out by the batteries that defended it; on shore, the resistance was stouter than they had been led to expect, and from hour to hour they were not at all sure that Rodney might not arrive. On the 13th they had intelligence of his near approach; they hastily re-embarked the soldiers and withdrew, leaving behind them the baggage and a considerable quantity of ammunition. They had better fortune against the practically undefended island of Tobago; but, notwithstanding their superiority in numbers, this was their only success, and in the beginning of July the French fleet went to Cape Français in San Domingo. We have already seen how clearly Rodney recognized that the season for operations on the coast of North America was fixed by the hurricane months, and M. de Grasse's retreat to Cape Français convinced him that he was preparing to go north. He would fain have gone there to meet him; but the state of his health compelled him to return to England. And this he did, directing Hood to take the command, and to reinforce the squadron at New York with as many ships as could be spared from the West Indies.

Rodney arrived at Plymouth on the 19th September. On the 24th he waited on the king at Windsor. In

London, where he was enthusiastically cheered by the people, he remained a short time for surgical advice, and then went to Bath to re-establish his health, for which only a short time was allowed, and in November he received orders to return to his command, which was now extended to the whole West Indies—a clear proof of the government's approval of his conduct during the previous year. On the 3rd November he was appointed Vice-Admiral of Great Britain, consequent on the death of Lord Hawke.

On the 3rd December Mr. Burke moved in the House of Commons for an inquiry into "the confiscation of the effects, etc., belonging to his majesty's new subjects in the Island of St. Eustatius;" and in doing so, propounded the extraordinary doctrine, that if a place surrendered at discretion, "from the moment of submission the vanquished parties were entitled to the security of subjects;" or, in other words, that the best, the only complete defence against invasion, is at once to surrender at discretion and receive the security and privileges of subjects. In a speech compounded of faction and unhealthy sentiment, he denounced Rodney's conduct during his command, and especially in remaining inactive for three months at St. Eustatius, and in exposing Hood to a superior force of the enemy.

Rodney, who was in his place in the House as member for Westminster, made an excellent speech, replying in detail to the several charges made against him. These have already been considered; but as some of the St. Eustatius dirt that was so freely thrown, has stuck to, and in some measure soiled his fair fame, his public statement may be properly repeated.

"When I seized all the property on the island," he said, "it was not for my own use. At the time, I thought it would all belong to the king, and that it was my duty to see the most made of it, to carry into the public treasury. I wished not for a shilling of it. I had no other idea at the time, but that the whole belonged of right to my country; and therefore, in all that I did for the preservation of that property, it was for my country and not for myself that I was acting."[1]

Rodney hoisted his flag on board the Formidable, at Portsmouth, on the 12th December, but owing to contrary winds and heavy weather was unable to get away from England till the 13th January, 1782. With a squadron of twelve ships of the line, he arrived at Barbados on the 19th February, and immediately sailed to join Sir Samuel Hood, in hopes of saving St. Christopher's by a decisive battle. On the 25th he joined Hood returning from his gallant but unsuccessful attempt to save the island.[2] Every effort was made to arrive off Martinique before the enemy; but these arrived first, and were refitting their fleet, somewhat damaged by Hood's rough treatment of it when De Grasse attacked him at his anchorage in Basseterre roads.

Convinced that Jamaica would be the object of attack by the combined fleet of France and Spain, Rodney now made every preparation for the defence of that important island, and was prepared to sail to its defence if he received intelligence of its being in danger; if necessary to land 2000 seamen and the marines of the fleet. From secret

[1] It is worthy of mention that General Vaughan, who, equally with Rodney, was responsible for St. Eustatius, appears to have escaped most of the obloquy thrown on his colleague.

[2] See *post*, pp. 381-3.

intelligence sent by the governor and Sir Peter Parker, the admiral at Jamaica, Rodney knew that there were thirteen Spanish line-of-battleships and 24,000 troops in Cuba and San Domingo, to be joined by 20,000 French from Brest, with their probable convoy of five or six ships of the line. At Jamaica there were only four line-of-battleships and some frigates;—and Parker[1] trusted to Rodney to send him as strong a reinforcement as could be spared. On shore, there were only 3500 regular troops, a fact of which the Spaniards were well aware; and they took no account of the militia or negro levies. It is clear that Jamaica was in much greater danger than is generally supposed; but in preparing for such an effort, so far from Europe, so impossible without the command of the sea, the allies were undervaluing the still remaining strength of the English navy, and they were omitting Rodney from their calculation. The victory of the 12th April put an end to their fond hopes.

The design of the Comte de Grasse was to form a junction with the Spanish admiral at Cape Français in San Domingo, when the united fleets would greatly outnumber any that we could oppose to them. The neglect of previous years was now telling terribly to our disadvantage; and alike in the West Indies, in the Channel, or in the Straits of Gibraltar, we were everywhere confronted by superior numbers. Our hold on the West Indies was failing; England could do no more. It could be maintained only by the strategy and tactics of Rodney and the downright hard fighting of his fleet. In his last letter to

[1] Sir Peter Parker, better known as the early patron of Nelson and Collingwood.

85
80
75
70
65
60
25
20
15
10
Scale of Miles
FLORIDA
Bahama Is
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Havana
CUBA
Tortuga
Cap Francais
HAYTI
St Domingo
Mona Passage
San Juan
Porto Rico
Jamaica
Port Royal
Gulf of Honduras
St Kitts
Nevis
St Eustatius
Barbuda
Antigua
Desecda
Guadeloupe
Marie Galante
Dominica
Fort Royal
Martinique
St Lucia
St Vincent
Grenadines
Barbados
Grenada
CARIBBEAN SEA
Curaçaa
Windward Islands
Tobago
Margarita
Trinidad
Cartagena
Porto Bello
Gulf of Darien
Panama
SOUTH AMERICA.

him, as he was leaving England, Sandwich concluded—"The fate of the empire is in your hands, and I have no reason to wish it should be in any other's;" and from Rodney's private correspondence we know that he fully recognized the responsibility and accepted it.

A considerable reinforcement had joined M. de Grasse, and his fleet numbered 35 line-of-battleships, as against the 36 with Rodney, who from Gros Islet Bay at St. Lucia kept a vigilant look-out on the movements of De Grasse at Fort Royal, forty miles north of him. On the morning of the 8th April, one of his look-out frigates, the Andromache, announced that the enemy were at sea, and in "little more than two hours" the British fleet was under way and in pursuit. On the morning of the 9th, it came in sight of the French, who being hampered with a large convoy had made slower progress. The decisive battle was to be fought between Dominica and Guadeloupe. On the 9th, De Grasse had an opportunity of cutting off our van squadron under Hood, while the centre and rear squadrons were becalmed under the high land of Dominica. He missed it, and after various manœuvres, Rodney got his chance, availed himself of it, and gained a decisive victory on the 12th April, 1782—a day henceforth memorable in our naval annals. De Grasse himself was captured, his flagship, the Ville de Paris, striking her colours to the Barfleur, which carried the flag of Sir Samuel Hood, with whom he had been so often engaged—at Martinique, off the Chesapeake, and at St. Kitts, only a few days before.

By this defeat the French force in the West Indies was paralyzed. Five ships were taken in the battle; but one of these, the César of 74 guns, caught fire and blew up

during the night. Two more were captured by Hood as they were trying to escape through the Mona passage. Five reached Curaçao almost sinking, and four put into Guadeloupe ; the remainder succeeded in reaching Cape Français. Great as the victory was, however, it might have been made even more decisive. Had the French been vigorously followed up next morning by a portion of the fleet, many more of their ships must have been captured, and the commander-in-chief could have kept a sufficient force to have coped with any number of the demoralized enemy that might have reached Guadeloupe or St. Eustatius. But it would certainly have been impolitic for the whole fleet to have run to leeward, from which they could not return for months, and so leave Rodney's special charge, the Leeward Islands, unprotected ; especially as, at the time, he did not know of the dispersion of the flying French. Irresponsible seconds are fond of giving advice, as we are well aware ; so are we also of the many cases in which, when they have assumed command, they have done no better, if as well. Not that Hood was one of those who advised what he would not have done himself. Still, Rodney's responsibility was tremendous.

A peculiarly satisfactory part of the battle is the high commendation which Rodney was able to give to all under his command ; contrasting so strongly with his report on the battle with Guichen on 17th April, 1780. The loss, too, in killed and wounded was fairly spread over the three squadrons, showing what an improvement had been made in the discipline of the fleet, and its power in manœuvring, in the two intervening years. As soon as Rodney was assured that there was no hostile force left in his rear, he

proceeded to Jamaica with the prizes and the most damaged portion of his own fleet, leaving Hood with a strong squadron off the west end of San Domingo.

Thirteen days before the battle, Lord Sandwich's long tenure of office had come to an end, and his place had been taken by Admiral Keppel, who was shortly afterwards made a viscount. One of the first measures of the new admiralty was to supersede Rodney, by appointing Admiral Pigot to the West Indian command—apparently on the very day of the battle. The Whigs had so long posed as the true patriots, and had so savagely attacked the jobbery of Sandwich, that the appointment of an incompetent and inexperienced man to an important command at a very critical time, has been universally condemned. The superseding Rodney must have been a foregone resolution; for the Whigs could not, with any pretence to consistency, support a man whom, only four months before, they had publicly accused of very grave offences; and it must, in fairness, be remembered that the Rodney that was superseded was not the victor of the 12th April, but the man who had not defeated Guichen, the man who had lost Tobago and St. Eustatius, the man who had not prevented De Grasse winning the battle of the 5th September and bringing about the surrender of York-town. It is of course true that Rodney had left the station before this battle was fought; but it was always possible to say that, as far as the service was concerned, a commander-in-chief incapacitated by gout and gravel was not very much better than a coward or a fool.

On the other hand, it is at least probable that personal feeling had more to do with the change than any zeal for

the public good. Rodney and Keppel had never been intimately associated. Not only had they never been messmates, but they had never served in the same fleet. Rodney had never taken any active share in party politics, but he was none the less allied with those who had attempted to ruin Keppel, and it must have been impossible for Keppel to forget the lampoons and epigrams which had contrasted Rodney's action with Langara and his own with D'Orvilliers. This, however, did not appear on the surface; and the change would have passed not only without comment, but as a natural and necessary measure, had not the victory of the 12th April put a totally new face on it, and had not a "nonentity" like Pigot been appointed to the command; a man who had not served a day as an admiral, and whose service as captain was extremely limited; who, on assuming command, gave signal proof of his incapacity by occupying seven weeks on the passage from Jamaica to New York, and that when time was all important. Hood was disgusted. In the previous year he had made the passage from Antigua to New York in eighteen days, and now wrote to his friend Jackson—"Do you think a certain noble viscount has acted on true patriotic principles, as a real friend to his poor distracted country, in placing an officer at the head of so great a fleet, so very unequal to the important command for want of practice?"[1] The country may be thankful that there

[1] [The appointment of Pigot to this command was not, however, the mere shady political job which it has seemed. It appears from the recently published *Autobiography of the Duke of Grafton*, that Keppel had a high opinion of Pigot as an officer, had been very anxious to have him with him in July 1778, and had yielded only to the repeated wish of the king that Palliser should be appointed.

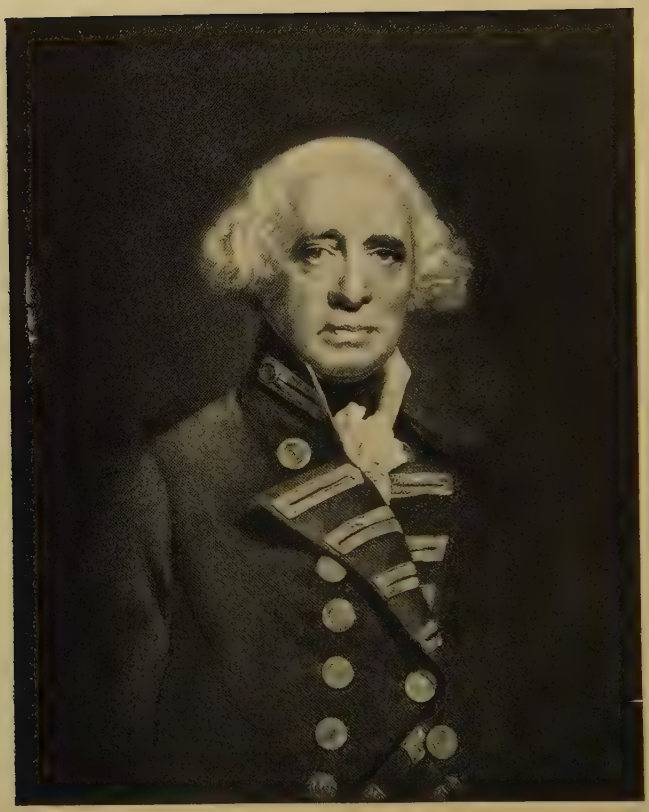
are now no political admirals, to be rewarded by naval commands for very different services.

Rodney's great victory was rewarded with a peerage. Of those with him, Hood, the second in command, was made a peer on the Irish establishment ; Drake, the third, and Edmund Affleck, the fourth, were made baronets. On his return to England, Rodney was received with universal acclamations. He retired into private life, and died early in 1792.

In the whole war, from 1778 to 1783, we captured from French, Spanish, and Dutch, eighteen line-of-battleships ; of which number Rodney captured, between January 1780 and May 1782, 7 French, 6 Spanish, and 1 Dutch. Three were destroyed by us, one—a Spaniard—by Rodney. Altogether, out of 21 lost to the enemy, Rodney was credited with 15, besides the Caracas convoy. He never let slip an opportunity of bringing his opponents to action, or of being himself in the thickest of the fight. Like all great men, as we see in the present day, he had his weaknesses ; but as they can be studied in any one of us, let us leave those alone, and strive, as far as we can, to study and to imitate his fearlessness of responsibility, his knowledge of his duty, the care he displayed for the comforts of his men. He towered a whole head and shoulders above any of his contemporaries in chief command in that war.

Hood's remarks about Keppel might have been still less flattering, if he had known that he considered Pigot a competent officer.]

HOWE



HOWE.

IX

EARL HOWE, K.G.

AMONG the great seamen of the eighteenth century, few names hold a more prominent position than that of Howe. From the day of his promotion to commander in 1745, to the day of his death in 1799, he was always to the front, and actively employed. Emphatically a worker, and no talker, his silence repelled strangers; yet he was trusted and respected by all who came into close contact with him, and beloved by those under his immediate command. "Undaunted as a rock, and as silent," was Horace Walpole's description of his character. As a tactician, Howe must be mainly judged by his conduct in command of the fleet at Sandy Hook and at Rhode Island in 1778; in the relief of Gibraltar in 1782; and in the actions with the French fleet on the 29th May, and 1st June, 1794: as a strategist, by the system he carried out when in command of the Channel fleet: as an administrator, by the policy he pursued when first lord of the admiralty. In the debates of the House of Commons, and later, in those of the House of Lords, he took little part. That silence, which, according to Walpole, was "characteristic of his race," he

sedulously maintained, except on those rare occasions when speech was necessary.

Although the more conspicuous events of Howe's career took place after his promotion to flag rank, it is interesting to glance through the earlier years of his life afloat, and to notice the opportunities he had, before the peace of 1763, of seeing every variety of service which the navy is called upon to perform.

He nominally entered the navy in 1739, at the age of thirteen ; but his first introduction to sea life was on board the Severn, which sailed with Anson on the famous voyage round the world. The Severn got no further than the Horn, and thence returned to England, *via* Rio de Janeiro. This start in his career must have been rough and hardening ; even if it is true, as stated in later days by a pamphleteer, that he messed and lived in the captain's cabin during the cruise. In the Burford, his next ship, he was present at the attack on La Guayra in 1743, and there first saw a shot fired in anger. He passed his examination for lieutenant in 1744, and in eighteen months had passed through the rank of lieutenant and was appointed commander of the Baltimore sloop. In this vessel, his first command, he fought a gallant action against a superior force, and was severely wounded in the head.

From the date of his promotion to captain in 1746, until his appointment to the Dunkirk in 1755, Howe's career was uneventful. The Dunkirk sailed with Boscawen to North America, and fired the first shot of the Seven Years' War. After Boscawen's return to England, the Dunkirk was ordered, with seven other ships, to cruise on the coast of Normandy for the protection of the Channel Islands.

The French were preparing an attack on Jersey and Guernsey. They had already occupied the Island of Chaussey as a base of operations. Howe embarked a small body of troops from Jersey and Guernsey, appeared with his squadron before Chaussey, and summoned the island to surrender. The governor agreed to do so on condition he might retire with his force to Granville. Howe seems to have had entire command of this little expedition. No councils of war were held, and it was completely successful. The French troops were withdrawn from the Normandy coast, and the idea of attacking the Channel Islands was abandoned.

In the attack on Isle d'Aix,[1] in September 1757, Howe commanded the Magnanime, and placed his ship within forty yards of a battery, which was soon silenced. His conduct on this occasion so impressed the pilot Thierri,[2] that when an attack on Fouras was projected, and the question arose as to which ship should lead in, he volunteered to pilot the Magnanime. It was suggested to him that the Barfleur drew less water, and was a better ship for the purpose. Still he preferred the Magnanime, and, on being asked his reason, replied—*Parce que le Capitaine Howe est jeune et brave.*

In 1758 Howe was placed in command of a squadron conveying a military expedition against the coast of France. He does not seem to have been in any way responsible for the operations. After an unsuccessful attack on St. Malo,

[1] See *ante*, p. 221.

[2] [This impudent renegade was really quite ignorant of that part of the coast, though he managed to make even Hawke believe in him.]

the Duke of Marlborough, who commanded the troops, requested him to return to England. It does not appear that Howe, like Admiral Porter at Fort Fisher, asked the administration to send him "another general," though, doubtless, he would have liked to do so.[1] Lieutenant-General Bligh was then sent in command. The expedition attacked Cherbourg with success, and destroyed the fortifications. An attempt was afterwards made on St. Malo, but a military council of war decided that nothing could be done, and the troops were re-embarked under a heavy fire. Several of the boats which were sent to bring off the rear-guard were struck by the shot from the enemy's field-guns, and others hesitated to approach the beach. Seeing this, Howe jumped into his boat and led the way to the beach. Many of the soldiers, who had taken to the water to escape from the French troops, were thus saved.

In Hawke's magnificent attack on the French fleet in Quiberon Bay, the Magnanime was one of the leading ships. The following extract from her log, which, from its peculiar style, appears to have been dictated by Howe himself, describes the part she took in the action—

"21st November, 1759. Fresh gales and hazy weather. At 3 p.m. arrived up with the rear of the French fleet to windward amongst others of the British van. And having, whilst endeavouring to gain on further ahead to their

[1] [According to Walpole, Howe and Lord George Sackville—the second in command under the Duke of Marlborough—"agreed so ill, that one day Lord George, putting several questions to Howe and receiving no answer, said, 'Mr. Howe, don't you hear me? I have asked you several questions.' Howe replied, 'I don't love questions.'" Walpole's stories are not always true; but this has an air of *vraisemblance* about it.]

centre, the fore-yard cut and broke in the slings by an accidental shot in passing the sternmost ships, bore down therefore to attack the rear-admiral, and fired upon him accordingly; but failing in our attempt to board[1] him by the slow wearing of the ship for want of head sails, falling to leeward of him, and when brought up to the wind again to take the advantage of engaging him in that situation, the Montagu and Warspite driving together on board of us, and forcing us still further to leeward of the French rear, stood away; therefore being disengaged from them after another of the enemy's ships disabled by the loss of her foretopmast, which we boarded[1] and began to engage. Soon after she struck; and finding ourselves very near the shore, anchored in 15 fathoms water, three miles from the Isle Dumet, causing the prize to do the same, and prepared to take possession of her accordingly; but the great part of the enemy's van making off from our fleet under favour of the approaching night, by passing near on each side of the prize, rendering unsafe to send a boat on board earlier, and the bad weather from doing it later in the evening, she had by that means an opportunity to move off to the southward during the night and run on shore in the morning."

The apologetic tone of this entry is characteristic. Howe does not seem to understand that he has played a leading part in an exploit which will always be regarded with admiration by seamen of all nations. He confines himself to the business of the moment. An enemy had surrendered to him, he had been unable to take possession, and he gives the necessary explanation. The science of self-advertisement was absolutely unknown to him.

[1] [It may be noted that in 1759 "to board" had still the old meaning of to lay the ship close alongside of—whether actually touching or not. "To board," in its present sense, was then "to enter."]

On the conclusion of peace Howe was appointed a lord of the admiralty, and retained that office until 1765. He was then given the lucrative appointment of treasurer to the navy, which post he held until 1770, when he was promoted to rear-admiral. According to Barrow, it was in those days customary for the treasurer to retain large balances in his hands. Howe was too honest and clear-sighted to consent to enrich himself by such an irregularity. "His accounts were clearly stated, and the balance regularly brought up, which was not always the case, either before or since." He was, in such matters, years ahead of his time.

In October 1770 Howe was promoted to the rank of rear-admiral of the blue. He was then forty-five years old, and had served for thirty years. During the Seven Years' War he had been actively employed in every sort of duty which can fall to the lot of a seaman. He had thus gained the experience and knowledge which he was thereafter to use for the service of his country in high command.

Until the outbreak of the revolt of the American colonies, Howe was unemployed. The estimation in which he was held is, however, shown by the fact that he was nominated commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean when, in 1770, war with Spain was apprehended in consequence of a dispute as to the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands. In February 1776 he was appointed commander-in-chief in North America, and at the same time received a commission, in conjunction with his younger brother, General Sir William Howe, then commanding the land forces in North America, empowering him to treat with the Americans, and to take measures for the restoration of

peace. Success in this portion of his mission was hardly to be expected. Before he arrived on his station the Declaration of Independence had been signed, and the colonists had applied to the French government for assistance. The instructions given by the ministry prevented any benefit being derived from the diplomacy of the two brothers, or from Howe's intimacy with Franklin. They were only empowered to grant pardon on submission. Though interviews took place with delegates from congress, it is not surprising that nothing came of them. Moreover Howe caused great dissatisfaction by sending a letter to General Washington, addressed "George Washington, Esquire, etc., etc." It was quite in accordance with English usage thus to subordinate the military to the civil rank;[1] but the general considered that his proper title had been intentionally withheld, and returned the letter unopened.

So long as France stood apart, the work of the navy during the American struggle was subsidiary to that of the army. The army was acting, as all British expeditionary forces must act, from a naval base. The work of landing provisions and stores, and attending to the wants of the fighting force, is as a rule extremely laborious, and is not of a description calculated to excite the attention, or call forth the praise of the folks at home. The heavy work

[1] [The colonists certainly considered the address of this letter as an intentional insult. That it was not so appears—independent of the English usage then and for many years afterwards—from the fact that Washington's rank as colonel had been formally recognized. Had Howe wished to imply a denial of the colonial government's right to confer rank on the officers of colonial troops, he would have addressed his letter to "Colonel Washington." It will be remembered that, forty years later, the English government adopted a corresponding form of address to "General Bonaparte."]

falls on the shoulders of the seamen; the glory and the honours fall to the lot of the soldiers. In the operations for the capture of Long Island and New York, and until the army had been landed for the reduction of Philadelphia, the navy had much labour and but little fighting to do. In all this work Howe's energy in directing and personally superintending his men was conspicuous.

A new enemy was now about to appear on the scene, and the minor part which had hitherto been played by the fleet was to be changed to one of the first importance. In February 1778 the French government signed a treaty of commerce with the United States. In March it was announced to the British government that a defensive alliance with the United States had been concluded. The British ambassador was in consequence withdrawn from Paris. War, however, did not actually commence till June, when Keppel's squadron fired the first shot.

On the 13th April the Comte d'Estaing left Toulon for North America with a squadron consisting of two ships of eighty guns, six seventy-fours, three sixty-fours, and a fifty-gun ship. He had orders to begin hostilities when he had reached a point in the Atlantic forty leagues to the west of Cape St. Vincent. He was anxious to bring his ships into working order before arriving at the seat of war. Evolutionary drills were frequently carried out. Two of his ships, the Guerrier and the Vaillant, were very bad sailers and seriously retarded the progress of the others. The squadron only reached the Straits of Gibraltar on the 17th May, and did not arrive off the mouth of the Delaware until the 8th July, eighty-seven days after leaving Toulon.

In the meantime the British government had sent orders to evacuate Philadelphia, and to move the occupying force to New York. Howe moved the army across the Delaware, embarked their stores, and, as soon as they were on their way to New York, sailed for Sandy Hook. He there received information of the sailing of D'Estaing's fleet, and also heard that Vice-Admiral Byron was ordered to join him with thirteen ships. When the army had reached New York, Howe moved his fleet to the bar, and moored them in a position to defend the passage. His force consisted of six sixty-fours, three fifty-gun ships, and two of forty-four guns.

When D'Estaing arrived off the Delaware, he found Philadelphia in the hands of the United States troops. Howe had left for New York ten days before. The French squadron followed, and reached Sandy Hook on the 11th July. They anchored outside the bar, and spent ten days in taking soundings. American pilots were sent to them, but only gave discouraging accounts of the depth of water. According to French accounts this never exceeded twenty-three feet; according to English accounts, on the 22nd July a sea-breeze, acting with the spring tide, raised the water on the bar to a depth of thirty feet. The French fleet weighed; but, instead of standing in to the attack, made sail to the southward. On board Howe's ships this retreat caused bitter disappointment. His crews had been reinforced by volunteers from the merchant ships and transports, and all were ready and longing for action. D'Estaing held a council of war, at which a *procès-verbal* was prepared, which duly set forth excellent reasons for doing nothing. "His inferiority as a military leader" was

indeed, as Captain Mahan remarks, "painfully apparent." Even if his two heaviest ships were unable to cross the bar, he had still a force at his disposal far superior in gun-power to that of Howe. With these nine ships an enterprising seaman would have at least attempted the passage.

The departure of the French fleet was most fortunate for Howe. Four of the ships of Byron's squadron arrived off Sandy Hook a few days after D'Estaing had left. Scattered as they were, and damaged by bad weather, they would probably have fallen into the hands of the enemy, if he had been still on the spot. Howe made every exertion to prepare his strengthened squadron for sea; and, in spite of the crippled condition in which the reinforcement had joined him, was able to sail on the 1st August. He had information that the French were steering for Rhode Island, and his object now was to save that island, and its English garrison from capture. The winds were baffling and his progress was slow, but he contrived to bring his ships to their destination on the 9th August, two days after the arrival of the French. On the 8th D'Estaing had forced the channel, and had anchored his ships inside in order to support the American troops in their attack on the British position.

Howe's arrival entirely altered the state of affairs. His force, though his ships outnumbered those of D'Estaing, was still inferior. But with the prevailing winds he had the power of attacking when he chose. His opponent, probably influenced by the fact that Howe had fire-ships with his squadron, abandoned the attempt on Rhode Island; and on the 10th, taking advantage of a fair breeze, brought his fleet out of the harbour. The French

had the weather-gage and manœuvred to keep it. Howe endeavoured on his part to wrest this advantage from them.

The two fleets manœuvred during the whole of the 11th August without coming to blows. In order to get a better view of his opponents' formation, Howe went on board the Apollo frigate. He seems to have had no intention of remaining in her during an action, but simply made use of a fast vessel in order to reconnoitre. The view taken by some writers that he intended to command his squadron in an engagement from the Apollo is not borne out by his own despatches. In the evening a gale of wind sprang up and dispersed both fleets. Howe was, in consequence, unable to return to his proper flagship until the weather moderated two days afterwards. Principally composed as it was of newly commissioned ships, D'Estaing's squadron suffered more than that of Howe. His own flagship, the Languedoc, of eighty guns, was dismasted, and while in that helpless condition was attacked by the Renown, a fifty-gun ship. Her little antagonist was manœuvred with such skill that the huge Frenchman only escaped capture by the arrival on the scene of some other ships of her squadron. Two other encounters between single ships took place with similar results.

D'Estaing made no further attempt on Rhode Island. He took his fleet to Boston, and, having moored it in a strong position, supported by batteries on shore, proceeded to refit. Shortly afterwards Howe appeared off the port, but seeing that the French had evidently abandoned any intention of immediate action, and recognizing that with his inferior force he was not in a position to attack them, he returned to Sandy Hook.

Thus Howe, with a force at first vastly inferior, and, even after the opportune arrival of the four ships, never equal to that of his opponent, had, by superior seamanship, in the larger sense of the term, successfully defended New York, and saved Rhode Island. The moral effect of his success was of the greatest importance to the British cause. The failure of the French to give efficient support to the attack on Rhode Island caused bitter disappointment to the revolted colonists.

Before the arrival of D'Estaing in North America, Howe had obtained permission to return to England. He afterwards stated in the House of Commons that he had been deceived into his command ; that he was deceived while he retained it; that, tired and disgusted, he desired permission to resign it; that he would have returned as soon as he obtained leave, but he could not think of doing so while a superior enemy remained in the American seas; and that, as soon as Mr. Byron's arrival removed that impediment by giving a decided superiority to the British arms, he gladly embraced the first opportunity of returning to Europe. No doubt his desire to relinquish his command was also in a great measure due to the fact that he had been superseded in the new commission appointed to treat with the American government. On the issue of this commission Lady Howe had written to Lord North suggesting that he should ask the king's leave for her husband to quit his command, as she was "convinced that his Majesty cannot wish Lord Howe to receive any mortification." Lord Sandwich sent the solicited permission in a civilly-worded letter, expressing a hope that it would not be acted upon. But Howe was not anxious to serve

under a ministry which had so mismanaged affairs, and a first lord who, he considered, had personally slighted him by not including him in the promotions to vice-admiral of the white and of the red, along with the other officers who had been advanced to flag rank at the same time as himself.

Howe turned over the command to Byron at Rhode Island, and sailed for England in September 1778. On his arrival at Portsmouth he at once struck his flag and came on shore. For nearly four years he remained unemployed. He had determined never to serve again under the existing government. His reputation among those whom he had commanded in North America was great, as may be judged by the following extract from a private letter written by Captain Raynor, himself a most gallant officer[1]—

"We are all just going to take leave of the first man in his profession; how he may be received I know not; but he is, in my opinion, the first sea-officer in the world, and so says every person here."

In 1782 the North ministry resigned, and was succeeded by Lord Rockingham's administration. Howe was at once appointed to command the Channel squadron, and was promoted to be admiral of the blue. On the 20th April he hoisted his flag on board the Victory, and on the same day was created a peer of Great Britain. His squadron was at first employed in watching the Dutch in the Texel.

In June he was directed to cruise off Brest, in consequence of news having been received that the combined French

[1] Barrow's *Life of Howe*, p. 117.

and Spanish fleets had left Cadiz, and were coming north. The British convoy from the West Indies was then daily expected. Howe's principal object was to protect the convoy. His force consisted of twenty-two ships of the line, while the enemy had left Cadiz with thirty-one sail, and the junction of the Brest squadron had raised their numbers to thirty-six sail. The combined fleet was indeed sighted, but no engagement took place. In view of the great disparity of force it was certainly not Howe's business to bring on a fight. On the other hand, divided command and the jealousies of the allied commanders prevented prompt or decisive action on the part of the enemy. The British fleet cruised in the chops of the Channel until early in August; when, having ascertained that the West India convoy had reached home in safety, Howe returned to Torbay.

During this cruise in the Channel Howe had an excellent opportunity of exercising his squadron and of testing the merits of his signal-book. He had devoted much time and trouble to the preparation of an evolutionary code of signals, and hoped that by its means an admiral's power of handling his fleet would be immeasurably enhanced. Barrow gives an extract from Howe's private journal which shows how sadly the result fell short of his expectations—

"The ships were together according to the signal, but instead of keeping their relative situations intended and would necessarily have been placed, most of them made sail to take stations *ahead*, which they ought to have done *astern* of their respective divisional commanders."[1]

[1] Barrow, p. 129.

If the directions in the signal-book were as clumsily expressed as in this lament over the shortcomings of its readers,[1] it is not surprising that the captains went wrong. Howe was a great tactician, and probably did more to advance the science of handling a fleet than any other officer before or since. At the same time it must be admitted that his style was most involved. He seems to have suffered from an absolute inability to make himself understood. The following quotation from his private journal of the 28th May, 1794, exemplifies his peculiar style.

"The body of the enemy's fleet keeping on in order of battle, and being approached to about three miles distant from them, their force consisting of about twenty-six ships of the line, besides frigates, it was judged requisite to form the British fleet in such order of battle ahead, as the ships, by their accidental situation at the time, could be so arranged ahead and astern of the Charlotte; to be in suitable disposition for any service which might occur in the night; nothing more of the action being distinguishable, and the firing ceasing in the rear soon after dark."[2]

Well might Sir E. Codrington remark concerning this passage—

"In Lord Howe's desire to make things clear to the commonest apprehension, he was led into a confusion of words which defeated its own object; many officers who thought they fully understood his signals were extremely puzzled by the instructions and additional instructions which were intended to remove all doubt and obscurity."

[1] [They were. Many of them are quite unintelligible; many more may be understood in two or three different ways.]

[2] Barrow, p. 228.

Barrow tells an amusing story in the same connection. Three or four of Howe's captains, before proceeding on detached service, were summoned by the admiral in order that he might explain their written orders more fully to them. After listening to his explanation they left the cabin, and, on talking the matter over among themselves, discovered that their views as to the admiral's meaning differed considerably. It was necessary to clear the matter up. The captains tossed up who should ask for another interview and obtain an explanation. The man upon whom the lot fell retired into the cabin. After an hour's further conversation with his chief he reappeared, and told his brother captains that, if anything, he understood less about the admiral's orders than before.

On the 13th September, 1782, the allied forces made their grand, and, as it proved, their final attempt on Gibraltar. The possession of this fortress has been, from the time it fell into our hands, regarded as of paramount importance. That catching though meaningless expression, "the key of the Mediterranean," has probably had much to do with the popular view of the value of the Rock. Meaningless it is; for the only key of a sea was in the eighteenth century, and is now, the possession of the command in its waters. However convenient to a fleet a fortified base such as Gibraltar may be, its value disappears when the fleet is unable to keep the sea, and its maintenance as a base depends on the ability of the fleet to keep up communication with it. Gibraltar, during the war of American Independence, was useless as a base, and a source of embarrassment to the fleet. With all the disadvantages of an island, in that all naval stores and

provisions must be conveyed to it by sea, it possesses the additional defect of being open to attack on the land side. The value of the place in 1782 was purely prospective. From 1793 to the peace of 1814 it gave to our ships a fairly sheltered anchorage in which, protected by the guns of the fortress, they could lie and refit. Until within the last ten years the guns of Algesiras could not range half-way across the Bay, and the guns of Gibraltar might be trusted to keep off hostile ships. In the present day, by the increased range of modern guns, Gibraltar has, so to speak, been moved alongside Algesiras; and in time of war the operation of coaling a ship alongside the Mole could only peaceably be carried on by permission of Spain. Yet what may be called the sentimental view of the value of the place largely prevails. It is, then, little to be wondered at that in 1782 the Rock should have held a fictitious value in the eyes of the contending powers, and that France and Spain on the one hand, and Great Britain on the other, should have made gigantic efforts for its possession.

While the guns of Crillon's floating batteries were still thundering in front of the Old Mole, Howe was already on his way down Channel. He had under his command thirty-four ships of the line; and, counting frigates and small craft, transports, store-ships and traders, his whole fleet and convoy numbered one hundred and eighty-three sail. Two regiments had been embarked to reinforce the garrison of Gibraltar, and the merchant ships were laden with provisions and stores. Howe sailed from St. Helens on the 11th September; but, so unwieldy in its movements was his enormous fleet, that a month elapsed before

he reached the Straits. On the 10th October, when the fleet was off St. Vincent, he sent in to Faro to obtain news of the enemy. His frigate returned with the intelligence that the combined fleet of fifty sail of the line was anchored in Algesiras Bay. This was corroborated by neutral ships. There was, therefore, every chance of a great battle. The flag-officers and captains were summoned on board the Victory to receive their final orders, and instructions were issued to the masters of transports. These last, however, as it turned out, were either misunderstood or disregarded. On the 11th the fleet stood in through the Straits, the transports leading, while the combined fleets of France and Spain looked on from their anchorage off Algesiras. Though our ships had a fair wind, and there was nothing to prevent the whole fleet of transports from reaching their appointed anchorage, none of them succeeded in doing so. The Panther, 74, which ship was leading the transports, stood into Rosia Bay, but the ships which followed her were swept round Europa Point by the current, and were in consequence compelled to beat to windward under most unfavourable circumstances. Howe led his men-of-war to the eastward of the Rock to cover his convoy. On the 13th the allies weighed and stood to the eastward, but made no attempt to engage the English fleet or to molest their convoy. It was afterwards stated that Cordova, who was in command, wished to cover two of his ships which had been driven from their anchorage in a gale on the 10th. However this may be, it is clear that with a fleet of forty-six ships of the line against Howe's thirty-three, the allies not only shunned an action, but ran to leeward of the English. On the 16th

an easterly wind sprang up. The transports and the store-ships were able to retrace their course against the current. By the 18th they were, with one exception, safely anchored under the guns of Gibraltar. The troops, which had been embarked in the men-of-war, were landed on the same day; and a large quantity of powder was supplied to the fortress from the fleet.

Having thus accomplished his mission, Howe proposed to take advantage of the east wind to return through the Strait. On the morning of the 19th, the enemy's fleet, then consisting of forty-five or forty-six sail of the line, was observed a short distance to the north-east. The British fleet was then nearly between Europa Point and Ceuta. There was not room to form line of battle on either tack, and Howe led his fleet to the westward through the Strait, followed by the enemy. On the morning of the 20th the wind had shifted to the northward, and the combined fleet were still to windward of the British. Howe formed line of battle to receive them. The allies had the choice of attacking or declining to attack, and he could only await their decision. It was sunset before the action began. The allies attacked the van and rear, apparently intending to make the latter their principal objective. The whole line was at last engaged, and long-range firing was kept up until ten o'clock with but little effect. The British ships occasionally returned the fire when the enemy approached within effective range. The allies would not and Howe could not come to close quarters.

On the morning of the 21st the enemy were seven leagues to the north-east of the Victory, the wind then

being north by west. Our fleet was scattered, the van having dropped far to leeward during the night. Howe does not mention this fact in his despatch, but it is noted in the Victory's log, which also contains the following remark on the 22nd—"Finding the van division could not form according to signal, bore away to join them." The 21st was spent in repairing damages to spars and rigging. This work was completed on the 22nd, by which time the enemy was out of sight. Provisions, especially water, were getting short, and a return to port was desirable. Howe carried out his orders by sending Rear-Admiral Hughes with eight ships to Barbados, detached three more on a cruise, and with the remaining twenty-two returned to England. Any attempt on his part to renew the engagement, after his ships had repaired the damages sustained on the 21st, was out of the question. It is indeed doubtful whether the circumstances of the case made it desirable that he should bring on a close action. True, the allied commander had shown his weakness in allowing an inferior fleet, hampered by a large number of transports, to carry out the relief of Gibraltar unmolested; and had further shown unwillingness to come to close quarters on the 20th. Still the disparity in numbers was great. The Spanish ships were probably individually of little value, but this in 1782 had not yet become an established fact.[1] Howe may

[1] [The French officers of the day, in reporting to their own admiralty, repeatedly expressed a very unfavourable opinion of their Spanish allies. Some of this may have been due to national jealousy, but not much. In a confidential report on such a subject, there was no object in deviating too widely from the truth, and most of the criticisms appear to be written in perfect good faith. See, for instance, Chevalier, *Histoire de la Marine française pendant la Guerre de l'Indépendance américaine*, pp. 183-4.]

well have considered that, having attained his object, he was not called upon to risk his fleet in action with an enemy so superior in numbers, who, by their position to windward, could concentrate on any portion of his fleet. Moreover, though, as usual, there is no hint of dissatisfaction with his captains to be found in his despatches, his own fleet was not so thoroughly under command as to enable him by superior skill in manœuvre to compensate for his inferiority in force. That the van of the fleet should have separated from the main body to such an extent that some of the ships were hull down at daybreak on the 21st seems to show that some at least of the captains, if not of the junior flag-officers, were not thoroughly up to their work. Of the former, one at least was reported a few days afterwards, when the detachment under Hughes left the fleet, to be unfit for foreign service on account of age and gout. Howe's ships had not left England in good condition. He afterwards stated that the Victory was very bad and very filthy when he hoisted his flag on board, and that many of his ships were in poor condition. If Howe had had the weather-gage, and the allies had been to leeward, it might have been said with some show of justice that he had devoted himself exclusively to the relief of Gibraltar, and had neglected the primary duty of attacking the enemy's force at sea. In other words, that he had followed the traditional policy of the French, rather than that of the English navy. As it was, the hostile criticism which the movements of the fleet after leaving the Mediterranean called forth, does not appear to have been justified by the facts. As to the actual relief of Gibraltar there can be no

two opinions. It was a magnificent piece of work, which excited the admiration of Europe.[1]

In January 1783 Howe was appointed first lord of the admiralty, and to him fell the task of reducing the fleets and paying off ships on the conclusion of peace. He only held the post for three months, when a change of ministry replaced Keppel at the head of the board. In December 1783, on the dismissal of the coalition ministry, Howe again became first lord. The ministers were pledged to reduction, economy was the order of the day, and Howe tried loyally to carry out the policy, the necessity for which had been impressed upon him by the prime minister. He cut down promotions, and proposed a reduction in the number of commissioners of the navy. It is not surprising that his conduct called forth many growls from both within and without the service. The navy complained because promotions were few; his colleagues in the ministry, and their supporters in parliament, complained because he was too strong a man to be influenced in his selections by political considerations. When, for the majority of officers a period of compulsory half-pay succeeds a period of full-pay, with frequent windfalls of prize money, the man at the head of affairs is not likely to be popular. The brevet promotion to the flag list, made in 1787, caused much discontent, and gave rise to debates in both houses of parliament. Sixteen captains were made admirals and forty were passed over. It is of paramount importance that those officers who are to command fleets in time of

[1] ["Celte opération, une des plus belles de la guerre, mérite d'être louée à l'égal d'une victoire."—Chevalier, *op. cit.* p. 358.]

war should be men of vigour. The system of promotion to flag rank in Howe's days, while doubtless fulfilling its purpose of procuring a reasonable proportion of flag-officers who were in the prime of life, was calculated to give the greatest possible dissatisfaction to those who were passed over. The system of pure selection is comprehensible, so is that of seniority. But the plan of promoting large batches of selected men, and relegating those who were passed over to what was then, as now, called the yellow list, was a clumsy and aggravating expedient. In the House of Lords, Howe took up the logically unanswerable position that he was responsible for the management of the navy, and that he must be left to exercise his own discretion in the matter of promotions. All speakers agreed in acquitting him of acting from personal motives in making his selections, while they condemned the system on which they were made. During his term of office he was much abused by those officers whose claims he was either unable or unwilling to satisfy, but not to a greater extent than might be expected under the circumstances. This may be said, that none of his detractors attribute to him corrupt motives, though they complain of his "ungracious manner" and "perverse impenetrable disposition." He seems to have kept clean hands in a corrupt age, and to have been ahead of his time in his disregard for political interest when making promotions. When Lord Boringdon asked him to transfer Sir Charles Pole from the guardship at Sheerness to a ship at Plymouth, "as more convenient by being near to his family connections," Howe replied, "It is the first time I have heard of a private convenience

spoken about within these walls."[1] If the walls of the admiralty have ears, how thoroughly they must have enjoyed the novelty and indeed *naïveté* of this remark.

Howe was not a man to be induced to quit his post by anonymous critics, or even by the strictures of the opposition in parliament. He, however, privately complained of want of support from the prime minister, who, though himself leaving the admiralty unbiased in the distribution of patronage, did not restrain his colleagues from pestering the first lord with solicitations on behalf of their private friends. He was also disgusted with the constant opposition which his honest efforts to effect economy met with from those who should have supported him. In August 1788 he obtained permission to resign.

In 1790 Howe was appointed to command the Channel squadron, and was ordered to hoist the union at the main, with the temporary rank of admiral of the fleet. He only held the appointment for six months; when, the difference with Spain which had caused the assembly of the squadron having been arranged, he hauled down his flag. He was then left undisturbed on shore until the outbreak of war with France in 1793. During this period of inactivity he was much troubled with gout, and visited Bath to undergo a course of treatment for the disease.

On the 1st February, 1793, Howe was appointed admiral and commander-in-chief of the fleet to be employed in the Channel. The other flag-officers nominated were Vice-Admirals Graves and Sir Alexander Hood, and

[1] Barrow, p. 196.

the Duke of Clarence. The last-named, however, did not join. Although the commission was issued in February, the fleet was not assembled until the 27th May, when Howe was ordered to take command of the ships at Portsmouth. He again hoisted the union at the main on board the Queen Charlotte, with the temporary rank as before. On the 14th July he sailed from St. Helens; and, meeting with heavy weather, put into Torbay. There he received information that the French fleet had been seen to the westward of Belle Isle. He again put to sea, and succeeded on the 31st in catching sight of the topsails of the enemy's ships. They apparently had seventeen sail of the line against his twenty-three. He was unable to get near enough to see their hulls, and on the 2nd August they were out of sight altogether. He cruised until the 10th; when, bad weather having come on, he returned to Torbay.

Howe's operations during the remainder of 1793 and the early part of 1794 were mere repetitions of the cruise above described. He was strongly of opinion that it was his duty to nurse his ships, and keep them in good repair. He was opposed to the plan of keeping watch in force on the enemy's ports. His idea was that the main body of the fleet should be stationed at Torbay, ready to sail when news was received that the enemy had put to sea. The watch on Brest was to be maintained by detached frigates. He thought that "the two contending fleets might then engage on something like equal terms, each of them fresh from their respective ports; whereas a blockading squadron keeping the sea for months without being relieved, and exposed to all kinds of weather, ought not to be considered

on a par with an enemy of equal force fresh from a port."[1] In fact, the condition of the hulls and rigging of the ships was to be considered of primary, the training of officers and men of secondary importance. His objection to long cruises may have been in a great measure caused by his sympathy with the feelings of those under his command. The blockade of Brest was a most unpopular service. The hardships caused by the frequent gales rendered it much more unpleasant work than watching Cadiz or Toulon. Frequent visits to Torbay were, no doubt, a relief to all ranks.

Howe's reasoning was shown by greater strategists than himself to be fallacious. Undoubtedly two fleets which both remain in harbour whenever it blows a gale will meet on equal terms. It remained for Jervis and Nelson to prove that a fleet which is constantly at sea, will meet a fleet which is usually in harbour, on most unequal terms. The trained crews invariably beat the untrained. They showed that in naval warfare the material condition of ships is a factor of small importance compared with the moral condition of their crews. But though wrong in his strategy, it was most natural that, for personal reasons, Howe should incline to a system which gave him occasional short periods of repose. It must be remembered he was now sixty-eight, an age which is, in the present day, considered to unfit an admiral for even harbour service at home, in peace time. Though his intellect was as clear, and his zeal for the service as great as at any period of his career, his physical powers were not what they had been. The task of getting into working order a large fleet of

[1] Barrow, p. 218.

newly-commissioned ships, must always be sufficiently fatiguing to an admiral. Howe had, in addition to the ordinary exercises, to accustom his captains to his code of signals. Judging by the many mistakes made on the 29th May and the 1st June, his efforts in this direction met with but partial success.

The practical result of Howe's strategy was that the French fleet, or detachments of their fleet, on several occasions left Brest. The British fleet occasionally caught sight of them, but never succeeded in bringing them to action. This caused great dissatisfaction at home. Howe was roundly abused and ridiculed. The public were paying heavy war taxes, and wanted some visible and tangible return for their money. They were clamorous for decisive action.

During the early spring of 1794 the Channel fleet was kept in harbour, repairing the damages caused by the November and December gales. In the middle of April the ships assembled at St. Helens. On the 2nd May they sailed with the outward-bound East and West Indies and the Newfoundland convoys in company. On the 4th, six ships of the line and two frigates were detached, with orders to accompany the convoys as far as Finisterre. The force left with the commander-in-chief consisted of twenty-six sail of the line, seven frigates, and a few smaller vessels. A convoy from North America was expected to arrive in France. Howe's object was to cut this off, and to engage the French fleet if it put to sea to cover its approach. On the 5th May he arrived off Ushant and sent two frigates to look into Brest. They reported that the fleet was at anchor in the roads. On the 19th May, having

seen nothing during a cruise on the probable line of approach of the American convoy, he again reconnoitred Brest, and discovered that the French fleet, under Admiral Villaret-Joyeuse, had sailed a few days before. Howe felt some anxiety for the safety of Rear-Admiral Montagu's detachment of six ships, which he thought were now returning from Finisterre, and were likely to fall in with the French. On the 20th, however, he heard from some prisoners that Villaret-Joyeuse was nearly one hundred miles to the westward. On the 25th two small war vessels were captured, and further information was obtained which confirmed this report.

Early on the 28th May, Howe's look-out frigates reported the enemy's fleet in sight to the southward. The wind was then south-by-west, blowing fresh. The French fleet bore down till within nine or ten miles of the English, and then hauled to the wind on the port tack. Howe pressed on in the order of sailing, that is, without forming line of battle ; and made signal for a general chase, and to engage the enemy on coming up with him. His weather division was partially engaged with the French rear until dark, with the result that the Audacious on the one side, and the Revolutionnaire on the other, were disabled. The former made her way to Plymouth, and the latter was towed into Rochefort.

At daylight, on the 29th May, the French fleet were about five miles to windward of the English ; both fleets being in line on the starboard tack, with the wind at south-south-west. At 7 a.m. Howe, seeing that his van was sufficiently advanced to reach the French rear, made signal to tack in succession. Villaret-Joyeuse wore his

fleet in succession in order to protect his rear; then, after hauling to the wind, he edged down to within "random shot distance" of the British van. The leading ship, the Cæsar, persisted in keeping under easy sail, in spite of repeated signals, and thus crowded up the van and centre, and caused the Queen Charlotte herself to drop to leeward. The instructions contained in the general signal-book of 1799, which presumably crystallize and confirm the practice of the officers commanding fleets immediately previous to the promulgation of the code, direct that the distance of the ship is to be preserved from the admiral's ship, while the course is to be governed by the leading ship of the line. It is a difficult and troublesome task to keep station on a ship astern, even with the help of steam. With ships under sail only, it was much more difficult. Howe's position in the centre of the fleet prevented him from seeing the leading ships, and from correcting their blunders. He was soon forced to abandon it, and lead the fleet himself.

At noon signal was made to tack in succession. This was "repeated as it became requisite for due notice thereof."[1] The leading ship was unable or unwilling to tack, and wore. The van ships after, as has been described, crowding back on the centre, were now straggling; and it appears that there was ample room for the Cæsar to have hauled to the wind astern of the third ship of the line, as the second ship, the Queen, which also wore, succeeded in doing. The Cæsar, however, did not pass through the English line until she reached the eighth ship. Howe, seeing that his

[1] Howe's private journal. Barrow, p. 230.

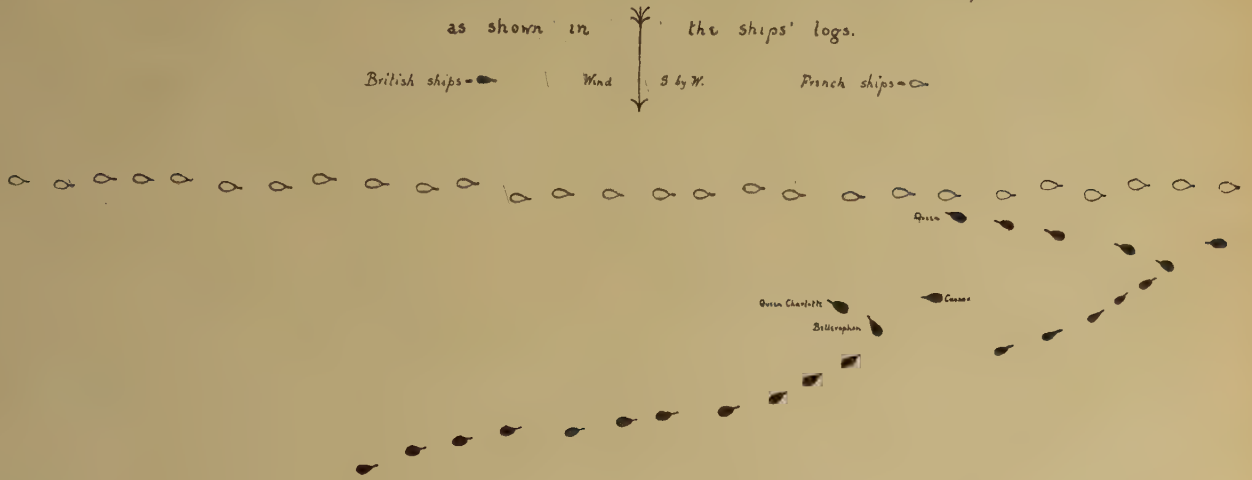
van had failed to carry out his intentions, tacked the Queen Charlotte, and led on the starboard tack towards the enemy's line, which was pierced between the fifth and sixth ships from the rear. He then again tacked and made signal for a general chase. The rear ships of the French fleet were cut off by the Queen Charlotte and the ships which had followed her. On this Villaret-Joyeuse made signal to wear in succession; and, finding that he was not obeyed, wore out of line to the rescue of his rear ships. Thus both admirals began the action in what was then the customary position of a commander, that is, in the centre of their respective lines. Both were compelled to abandon that station, and assume the more natural position of leader. Signals and instructions may be misunderstood; or, in the smoke of action the former may be unseen. The movements of the leading ship of a line are far more likely to be observed and far more likely to be followed.

The result of the engagement on the 29th May was briefly as follows—Both fleets covered their disabled ships and no prizes were taken; but Howe, by the masterly manœuvre of leading his centre through the enemy's line, and cutting off the rear, had gained the weather-gage, and was now in a position to choose his own method of attack. The partial engagements on this and on the previous day had shown him that his ships, owing to the better training of their crews, were individually superior to those of the enemy. On the other hand the conduct of some of his captains had bitterly disappointed him. Ships had not kept their stations, and the failure of the Cæsar to tack when ordered, or to keep to the wind after she had

Sketch Showing Position of the

British and French Fleets on the 29th May 1794, 1·30 p m

as shown in the ships' logs.



The Admiral finding that our leading ships was passing to leeward of their line tacked in the midst of a very heavy fire or cannonade and cut through between the 4th and 5th ship in their rear. We followed and passed between the 2nd and 3rd ship.

Log of Brilliophon. 29th May.

29th MAY 1794.

[*To face page* 350.

wore round on the starboard tack, had nearly frustrated his attempt to gain the weather-gage.

During the 30th and the greater part of the 31st May a dense fog prevailed ; the wind moderated and the swell abated. In the afternoon of the 31st the fog cleared off and the enemy's fleet was seen to leeward forming into line of battle. Howe stood on to bring it on his lee beam, but before this was effected, darkness was approaching. It was thought on board the Queen Charlotte that in spite of this he would engage. Codrington, the signal lieutenant, said to him, "I suppose, my lord, you will bring them to action by night?" "No, sir," was the reply, "I want daylight, to see how my own captains conduct themselves." Such a remark from a reticent man like Howe speaks volumes.

At daylight, on the 1st June, the French fleet was seen in order of battle to leeward. Twenty-six sail of the line, six frigates, and a corvette, were counted from the Queen Charlotte. Howe gave the crews time for breakfast and then bore up, signalling first that he intended to pass through the enemy's line and engage to leeward ; and secondly, that each ship was to engage her opponent in the French line. The enemy were on the port tack, slowly forging ahead ; the British attack was therefore made on a line of bearing parallel to the French line, the ships having the wind on the port quarter. If Howe's orders had been carried out in their entirety, the greater part of the French fleet would in all probability have been disabled. His intention was that each ship should pass close under the stern of her opponent, and engage close alongside to leeward. A ship raked in this manner by another of equal

force must suffer such loss as to render her incapable of keeping up an efficient fire. The stern of an old sailing ship was her most vulnerable point. A double-shotted broadside could be fired by the raking vessel; for the number of ports and the comparative weakness of the stern timbers rendered high velocity unnecessary for penetration. Above all, there was a fair chance of disabling the steering gear. With a well-trained and disciplined crew, who could be trusted to bide their time until, looking along their guns, they could see the hull of the enemy, the effect was terrific.

On the other hand there was no attempt at concentration; ship was pitted against ship. It was extremely improbable that every vessel, however well handled, could be placed alongside her opponent in the enemy's line. Howe probably resolved to make a simultaneous attack because, with his fleet in line abreast or line of bearing, he could keep his ships in view and under command until the moment of contact with the enemy. This would not have been the case had he attacked in one or more lines ahead. Nelson, at Trafalgar, hurled the leaders of his columns through the enemy's line, certain that they would be supported by the ships astern of them.[1] Howe had no such confidence in his captains.

Whether the fault was due to imperfect comprehension of signals, to confusion caused by the smoke, or to the

[1] [Nelson's celebrated Memo. of 9th October 1805 provided for engaging in line abreast or line of bearing. The state of the weather on the 21st, and the relative position of the two fleets, rendered a modification of the prescribed plan necessary. There is every reason to suppose that this possibility had been foreseen, and provided for *vivâ voce*.]

general tendency of mankind to blunder, it is impossible to say. Of the twenty-six ships in the British fleet, only six cut their way through the French line. In several cases this failure was clearly due to no fault of the captains. In others, the commanding officers deliberately engaged to windward and made no effort whatever to carry out the admiral's orders. The result was a *mêlée*. Howe himself, in the Queen Charlotte, set a noble example. His ship was steered for the French flagship; and, in spite of the efforts of her second astern to close the gap, passed so close under her stern that her ensign brushed the Queen Charlotte's bow. As she passed, every gun in succession was fired into the Montagne's stern. That ship never recovered from the effect of the blow. The Queen Charlotte rounded to under her quarter and engaged her, but received little or no fire in return. Shortly afterwards the Montagne ranged ahead and drew away from her enemy; who, having lost her fore and main topmasts, was not in a condition to follow her.

Two hours after the first shot had been fired, ten of the French ships were totally dismasted, and two had lost their main and mizen-masts. The Vengeur was in a sinking condition. Of the British ships, two were totally dismasted, three others had lost a lower mast, and four more had lost one or more topmasts. There were therefore seventeen British and fourteen French ships which were fairly under command, though their rigging was in most cases much damaged. Only seven of the French dismasted ships fell into our hands. The remaining five were permitted to escape to leeward, were covered by the efficient French ships, and in some cases were taken in

tow by smaller vessels. The failure to secure these disabled ships caused much unfavourable comment in the fleet. There seems no doubt that they could and should have been made prizes. They escaped because Howe called the fresh British ships to the aid of the Queen Charlotte, when they were actually between the disabled French ships and their repeating ships.[1] This unfortunate order was given by the advice of Sir Roger Curtis, the captain of the fleet. Codrington says plainly that this counsel was given "in a fright." He was not friendly to Curtis, and the expression is harsh. Notwithstanding this, the testimony is valuable as showing the opinion held by comparatively junior officers who were present, and who were more likely than their superiors to speak out plainly on such a subject. The view is also supported by Sir Robert Stopford's account of his visit to the Queen Charlotte, at this period of the action.[2] Barrow thinks that Howe was tired out by the exertions of the four previous days, and relied upon the opinion of his chief of the staff; to which statement, Codrington appends the marginal note, "Nonsense." Still, in support of Barrow's view, it must be remembered that Howe was over sixty-nine, suffered greatly from gout, and, since the enemy were first sighted on the 28th, could have had little or no rest. However it may be explained, the fact remains that the five ships in question ought to have been secured, and that they escaped. Nelson, in a letter to his brother on the state of affairs in the Mediterranean, remarked, "If we only

[1] Barrow's *Life of Howe*, p. 252: MS. notes by Sir E. Codrington, in a copy now in the British Museum.

[2] Barrow, p. 257.

make a Lord Howe's victory, take a part and retire into port, Italy is lost."

People at home were jubilant at the news of the victory, and were not disposed to be critical. The arrival of the six captured ships in port was the first visible return the nation had received for the great expenses of the fleet. Howe was welcomed with applause and gratitude. The king visited the Queen Charlotte at Spithead and presented him with a sword, and the promise of the garter, which, however, was not fulfilled until three years after.

The distribution of honours to the captains produced some controversy and unpleasant feeling. Howe, in his first despatch after the battle, says that though he will have distinguished examples hereafter to report, he presumes that the determined bravery of the officers and ships' companies will have been shown by the results of their exertions. When called upon for further particulars, he forwarded the reports of the junior flag-officers on the behaviour of the ships under their immediate command. Collingwood, who, in consequence of Admiral Bowyer's wound, signed the report, omitted his own name, and did not receive the medal till after the battle of Cape St. Vincent. Captain Molloy, being dissatisfied with Howe's unfavourable remarks on the conduct of the Cæsar, applied for a court-martial on his conduct in not keeping to the wind on the 29th May. Howe recommended that he should be tried for his whole conduct on the 29th May and 1st June. This was approved by the admiralty, with the result that Molloy was dismissed from the Cæsar. He suffered from having been placed in a prominent position. His sentence appears to have been a just one;

but there were others who, though their conduct on the 1st June, and in the preceding actions, was not what it should have been, escaped scot free.

The year 1794 saw the last of Howe's service at sea. He took the fleet out for a month's cruise in September, and returned to Torbay. He again put to sea in November, on receiving a report that a French squadron had been seen to the westward of Ushant. He failed to fall in with it, and returned to Spithead at the end of the month. During the years 1795 and 1796 he remained in nominal command of the Channel fleet although living on shore. Lord Bridport, an officer in whom he had no great confidence, was, during this time, the real commander-in-chief. It was not until 1797 that his request to resign the command formally was complied with.

A few weeks before his retirement Howe was sent to Portsmouth to negotiate with the mutineers of the fleet at Spithead, and, if possible, to induce them to return to their duty. For some time past there had been growing discontent among the seamen of the Channel fleet. They trusted "Black Dick," and probably, if his age and the state of his health had permitted him to remain in active command, the evil might have been averted. The anomalous state of affairs by which Lord Bridport, a man whose views of the service differed greatly from those of Howe, was the actual commander-in-chief, while the admiral of the fleet remained on shore, aggravated matters. Besides, Sir Roger Curtis, according to Codrington, had induced Howe to issue orders curtailing the amount of leave given to the men when the fleet was in port. In March 1797 Howe received petitions from the crews of

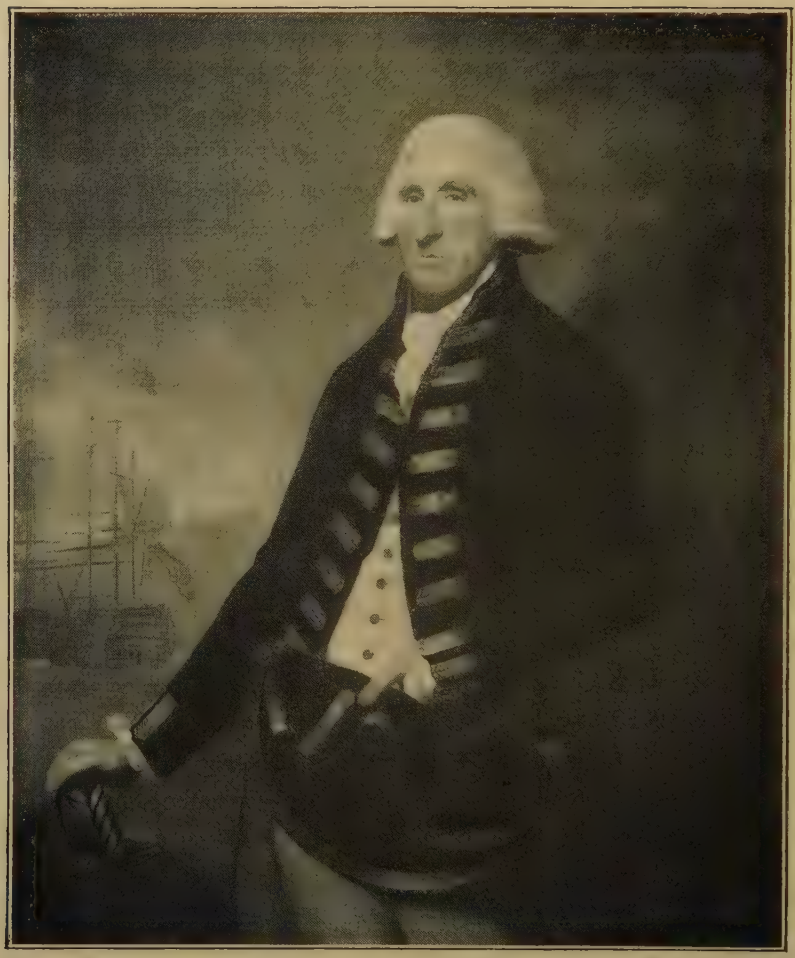
the Royal George, Formidable, Ramillies, and Queen Charlotte, asking that an increase of pay lately granted to the army and militia, also the provision made for their wives and families while serving abroad, might be extended to the seamen of the fleet. The petitions were identical, and three of them appeared to Howe to be in the same handwriting. This led him to believe that they were the fabrication of the same individual. This was probably the case, but it is difficult to understand why he should have considered it a reason for treating them as of no importance. He informed Lord Spencer, the first lord of the admiralty, and wrote to Sir Peter Parker, port-admiral at Portsmouth, and to Lord Bridport. They agreed that the petitions were the work of "some ill-disposed person." No notice was taken of them. Nelson evidently thought that they were sent back unanswered, but this does not appear to have been the case.

On the 12th April the port-admiral reported to the admiralty that he had information of a concerted plan to seize the ships. The fleet was ordered by telegraph to proceed to sea. On the signal being made to weigh, the men broke into open mutiny. Concession after concession was made by the admiralty without avail. At length Howe was sent to attempt to arrange matters. He had a most difficult and unpleasant task to perform. As the men realized their power, so had their demands increased. In the end, all they asked for was practically conceded. On one point only Howe's influence obtained the shadow of a success. Independent petitions were sent to him from each ship, imploring his intercession, and expressing regret for misconduct. This was the last official act of his life.

He appears to have received orders to concede everything, and then to have been accused of weakness in giving in to the men. If Howe, on the one hand, had been a Nelson, with the wonderful power of attracting those under him; or, on the other hand, a Jervis, the mutiny might possibly have been prevented, or suppressed. But he deserved a better *finale* to his career than to be made the mouthpiece of an ignominious surrender.

In the present day the name of Howe is inseparably associated with the relief of Gibraltar, and with the victory of the 1st June. These great actions stand out with such prominence, that they are apt to overshadow and obscure the steady work of his lifetime. For years his leisure hours had been spent in improving the naval signal code. His talent for organization was great. The manner in which he handled the huge fleets under his command called forth the admiration of his contemporaries. His signal code greatly increased the power of an admiral over his fleet, and thus directly contributed to the success of the great seamen upon whom his mantle was to fall. Some may agree with Nelson's remark, "Lord Howe is certainly a great officer in the management of a fleet, but that is all;" but the majority of students of naval history will prefer his later estimate of Howe's character, when, writing after his own greatest victory, he calls him, "Our great master in naval tactics and bravery."

HOOD



HOOD.

X

VISCOUNT HOOD

It is surely one of the most romantic passages of our naval history, that from the family of a Dorsetshire yeoman of the seventeenth century should spring a brilliant group of naval commanders, two of whom—brothers—became peers of the United Kingdom, and a third—a cousin—a baronet. In this present generation, a third peerage has been conferred on the family, in the person of Lord Hood of Avalon. In the reign of Charles II, Alexander Hood of Mosterton married Elizabeth Beach, daughter of a neighbouring clergyman, and had by her three sons—Alexander, Arthur, and Samuel. Of these, Alexander married in the adjoining parish of Netherbury, where he inherited the lease of the farm held by his father-in-law, and had a large family of sons and daughters; amongst them, Samuel,[1] baptized on the 14th August 1715. Arthur, the second son, born in 1678, matriculated in Trinity College, Oxford, in 1694; graduated in 1697, and in 1709 was appointed to the rectory of Dowlish Wake in Somersetshire. The third

[1] [This was the third son baptized as Samuel: the two others, born in 1712 and 1713, died in infancy.]

son, Samuel,[1] born in 1695, matriculated at Lincoln College, Oxford, in 1711; graduated B.A. in 1714 and M.A. in 1717; he was ordained; was for some time master of the grammar school in Beaminster, where he married Mary, daughter of Richard Hoskins. In 1723 he was appointed to the vicarage of Butleigh in Somersetshire, where, in 1724, his eldest son Samuel was born, and three years later, a second son, Alexander. These were the two brothers afterwards known to fame as Viscount Hood and Viscount Bridport.

Their first cousin, Samuel Hood of Kingsland in Netherbury, seems to have served for some time as a purser[2] in the navy; he married in 1751 and had three sons—Arthur, a lieutenant in the navy, lost in the Pomona sloop in the West Indies, in 1775; Alexander, born in 1758, was captain of the 74-gun ship Mars when she captured the French ship Hercule on the 21st April, 1798, was mortally wounded in the action, and died as the sword of the French captain was presented to him. The youngest of the three, Samuel, born in 1763, commanded the Zealous in the battle of the Nile; served with distinction in the Bay of Biscay and in the Baltic; was made a baronet and a K.B., and died, vice-admiral and commander-in-chief in the East

[1] [An earlier Samuel, born in 1651, son of Tremmor Hood of Mosterton, and probably brother of the Alexander of Mosterton, already named, matriculated at Exeter College, Oxford, in 1669, and in 1676 became rector of Hardington Mandeville in Somerset. The name Tremmor was kept up in the family. In 1782, Tremmor Hood was witness of the marriage of Arthur Hood of Netherbury—nephews probably of Samuel Hood of Kingsland (1715–1805).]

[2] [Very probable: but among the many Samuels of the family the identification is doubtful.]

Indies, in 1814. His father died at Netherbury, at the age of ninety, in November 1805.

The introduction of this remarkable family to the navy is traditionally attributed to an accident to the carriage of Captain Thomas Smith—popularly known as 'Tom of Ten Thousand'—as he was driving through Butleigh. As there was no place of public accommodation, Smith was glad to accept the hospitality of the vicarage, and offered to take one or both of the lads to sea. It is impossible to say now how much of this is true.[1] There is nothing improbable in it, and the boys did go to sea under the immediate patronage of Captain Smith; but, on the other hand, the Grenvilles were lords of the manor and patrons of the living of Butleigh; they were also cousins of Lord Lyttelton, Smith's half-brother; and though Smith was illegitimate, he seems to have been recognized and received as one of the family.[2]

In January 1741 Smith commissioned the Romney, and on the 19th January, Alexander Hood, the younger of the brothers, joined her with the rating of "captain's servant." The elder brother, Samuel, joined her, with the same

[1] [The story is told with most suspicious confusion of place and date. The breakdown is said to have happened in 1739 and at Thorncombe; but it is certain that the boys did not go to sea till 1741, and their father did not become vicar of Thorncombe till 1760.]

[2] [It must be considered a curious coincidence that both Hood and Nelson—who, in the earlier part of his career, was closely associated with Hood—were sons of country clergymen; and the temptation is strong to suppose that they both rose by an early recognition of their merit. That they rose to distinction by their merit is undoubted; but the merit first recognized was, in their case as in most others, the influence of friends or relations; of the Grenvilles and Lytteltons, in the case of Hood; of Maurice Suckling, the Comptroller of the Navy, in the case of Nelson.]

rating, on the 6th May. During the season of 1741 the Romney was on the Newfoundland station, an excellent school of seamanship. In April 1742 Captain Thomas Grenville succeeded Smith in command of the Romney, and for the next twelve months the brothers were with him on the coast of Portugal. In April 1743 Grenville was moved into the Garland frigate, and the brothers then separated, Alexander joining Smith in the Princess Mary, and Samuel going to the Garland with Grenville. In November he was discharged to the Sheerness with Captain Rodney; and in September 1744 he went with Rodney to the Ludlow Castle. In January 1746 he was moved into the Exeter, again with Captain Smith, at that time senior officer at Leith; and on the 17th June, 1746, he was promoted to be lieutenant of the 20-gun frigate Winchelsea. In her, and, in 1748, in the Greenwich and in the Lion he continued till the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. In November he was put on half-pay, and so remained for the next four years. At this time, in 1749, he married Susannah, daughter of Edward Linzee, who was for several years mayor of Portsmouth. Alexander, who had been promoted to be lieutenant in December 1746, was also on half-pay at this time; but of their private life no record remains. They were certainly poor; for a lieutenant's half-pay was exceedingly small—2*s.* per diem, and neither of them had made any considerable prize-money.

Through 1753 Samuel Hood served as a lieutenant of one of the guard ships at Portsmouth, and in 1754 he was promoted to command the Jamaica sloop, which early in 1755 went out to North America as part of the convoy of the troops of the ill-fated expedition under the command

of Braddock. In the autumn, when Commodore Keppel returned to England, the Jamaica was ordered to join Boscawen at Halifax; and Hood, having news of the fever which was raging in the fleet, entered all the men he could pick up, and took them with him; a timely reinforcement for which he received Boscawen's warm commendation. In the following year he was appointed by Commodore Holmes to act as his flag-captain in the Grafton, and commanded her in the casual rencounter with a French squadron off Louisbourg on the 26th July. On the return of the Grafton to England in the end of the year he found that he had been promoted by the admiralty to "take post" from the 22nd July. His younger brother, who was junior to him as lieutenant and as commander, had been posted six weeks earlier, thus becoming the senior for the rest of their career. The reversal of what might be considered the natural order of things does not seem to have led to any disagreement. The two continued, as always before, on the best terms; though, whether by arrangement or not, they never chanced to serve together.

In the spring of 1757 Hood was appointed to the 50-gun ship Antelope, and within a fortnight—on the 14th May—engaged and drove on shore in Audierne Bay, the French ship Aquilon of the same force. The Antelope had followed her in so closely that it was only by a smart bit of seamanship that she escaped the Aquilon's fate. As it was, she tacked and stood off to repair damages, and in an hour's time returned to complete the destruction of the enemy. In February 1758 Hood commissioned the Vestal, a 32-gun frigate, attached during the year to the grand fleet with Hawke and Anson, or cruising independently

between Ushant and Cape Clear. Early in 1759 she sailed for North America with the squadron under Commodore Holmes and a large convoy. Off Cape Finisterre she was detached in chase of a strange sail, which she came up with, and after a running fight lasting for three hours, compelled to surrender. This was the French frigate Bellona, also of 32 guns, dismasted, and with 42 men killed. The Vestal's masts were all badly wounded, but her loss in men was comparatively small. Hood's conduct was deservedly approved; but the Bellona's defence was also extremely creditable, for she was obliged to fight at a disadvantage and on Hood's own terms. The Trent, a 28-gun frigate, had started in chase in company with the Vestal; and though she had been left far behind, the knowledge that she was there forced the Bellona to a running fight.

The damage that the Vestal had received put a stop to her American voyage, and after refitting, she joined the squadron under Rodney in the blockade and bombardment of Havre de Grâce.[1] Rodney commented severely on the ignorance of his pilots, and wrote that "had it not been for the captains of the Deptford, Vestal and Juno, and the first lieutenant of the Dolphin, I should have found it extremely difficult and tedious to have anchored the bomb-vessels properly; but these gentlemen, during the night, placed them in a position to effectually bombard the invasion flotilla." Early in the following year the Vestal went out to the Mediterranean, and remained there till peace was made in 1763.

The war so brought to an end was for us a most glorious

[1] See *ante*, p. 284.

one. By it we gained the whole of North America east of the Mississippi; Grenada, the Grenadines, St. Vincent, Tobago and Dominica, in the West Indies; Minorca; and Senegal on the west coast of Africa. Our commerce had increased by 30 per cent.; and the grateful citizens of London recorded of the elder Pitt that "he was the only minister who had ever made war and commerce flourish together." But our diplomatists restored to the French the right of fishing and drying fish on the shores of Newfoundland—out of which has sprung a plentiful crop of disputes—and St. Lucia, the key of our possessions in the West Indies, with Martinique and Guadeloupe. It appeared as if, in diplomacy, we were no match for our foes.[1]

During the years immediately following the treaty of Paris, Hood commanded a guardship at Portsmouth; but in April 1767 he was appointed commodore and commander-in-chief in North-American waters. This post he held for three years of intense excitement; and his letters,[2] whether to the admiralty or to the secretary of state, are a very interesting contribution to the history of the period,

[1] [Better results might certainly have been obtained, considering the absolutely dominant position we then held; but the failure was not altogether diplomatic; and even as it was, a very capable judge—Mr. Edward Twisleton—writing in 1872, just after the conclusion of the Franco-German war, said:—"My impression is that the French felt more humiliated during the period between 1763 and the American War of Independence than during an equal number of years after 1814. The loss of Canada and their expulsion from America wounded their national feelings of pride then, nearly as much as the loss of Alsace and Lorraine wounds those feelings now" (*Memoirs of Henry Reeve*, vol. ii. p. 208).]

[2] Now in the Public Record Office. Some of them were printed in 1769, in a collection entitled *Letters to the Ministry*.

describing, as they do, the ferment and discontent which pervaded all classes in New England, and foretelling clearly all that afterwards came to pass. In 1768, consequent on disturbances at Boston, he sent his flagship, the Romney, there, to assist the civil power; giving very explicit directions for securing the ship "against the mischievous humour of the populace, as well as for preventing desertion." The necessity for this latter is not to be wondered at, as he reported that there was "great murmuring amongst the crews of the armed schooners; they have petitioned me for their wages, having five years' due." It would be out of place to enter here on the details of these important letters. Written from a different point of view from that of the more familiar accounts of the troubles at Boston, the effect is substantially the same, and is convincing as to the very general discontent and the resolute attitude not of the populace only, but of all classes.

For seven years after his return from North America, Hood had command of a guardship at Portsmouth, sometimes taking her for a cruise in the Channel, exercising his men at great guns and small arms, or pressing seamen from the homeward-bound merchant ships. In one of his letters he reports—"I have had no success in raising men, as, owing to easterly winds, the trade is unable to enter the Channel. I could not have remained longer for want of beer and surgeons' necessaries, having never had less than forty on the sick-list the whole cruise." In the same ship, he applied for the superannuation of the gunner—"which he is justly entitled to, being seventy-five years old, and totally unfit." But in the stress that fell on the navy at that time, and, in some cases, from departmental jobbery, similar cases

were not very unusual. Hood's brother, Alexander, reported his gunner as "old, worn out, and incapable of service;" and Cook, at Batavia, noted that every man had been down with fever "except the sailmaker, an old man between seventy and eighty, who was constantly drunk every day." In 1776 the boatswain of the Winchelsea was reported as "a very infirm man, more than seventy years of age." In 1779 the boatswain of the Arrogant was "upwards of seventy; has been more than sixty years at sea, and is quite worn out and incapable;" and the carpenter was, "by ill state of health, old age and infirmities, incapable of doing his duty." And these are only some out of very many that might be mentioned.[1]

In January 1778 Hood was appointed commissioner at Portsmouth dockyard and superintendent of the Academy. It was probably in this last capacity that he was consulted by the king as to the necessary outfit for Prince William Henry as a midshipman, and that the king wrote to him on the 11th June, 1779, ordering that "the young man should be received without any parade and sent on board his ship at once." He joined the Prince George on the 15th June.

Among the many promotions which accompanied the king's visit to Portsmouth in May 1778, Hood was made a baronet. Under ordinary circumstances he would have continued commissioner of the yard till old age incapacitated him, but the circumstances were not ordinary,[2] and in September 1780 he was promoted to rear-admiral, and specially selected to go to the West Indies as second in

[1] Even as late as 1848, the writer had a man under him who got drunk on his sixty-seventh birthday.

[2] Cf. *ante*, p. 292.

command to Sir George Rodney. After considerable difficulty in assembling the convoy, he left England on the 29th November; and having news of an enemy of superior force on the ordinary track to the West Indies, kept well to the northward, at once "for the security of the valuable charge committed to my care, and for the chance of falling in with our expected East Indian fleet, and putting its commanding officer on his guard." Sailing in December, he naturally came in for some bad weather. During a heavy gale, the Monarca, one of the line-of-battle ships of his squadron, was seen to leeward, with only her fore-mast standing. "All the iron work of her main channel had given way, and the mast went by the board; the mizen-mast and fore-topmast soon followed." Such a state of things was apparently not very unusual in those days, and no particular comment was made on it.[1]

On the 4th January, 1781, Hood joined his commander-in-chief at St. Lucia, and found him in pressing need of the stores brought out by the convoy, many ships of which had slipped away as they approached the West Indies, and when, a month later, St. Eustatius was taken, were found there engaged in the profitable but disloyal trade with our enemies, which was carried on through that island. The crews were very properly pressed and obliged to fight

[1] [See *ante*, p. 200. During the greater part of the eighteenth century, and the early part of the nineteenth, the dockyards were sinks of iniquity; but they were never so denuded of stores, never such dens of organized villainy, as under the administration of Lord Sandwich. See *Life of Viscount Keppel*, vol. ii., pp. 23, 326–58; Parliamentary Papers; *Report from the Committee appointed to examine into the conduct of the Commissioners for Victualling His Majesty's Navy*, 1782.]

against those whom they themselves had helped to supply with stores and munitions of war.

After the capture of St. Eustatius, and in consequence of intelligence that a large French convoy, with a powerful escort of ten or twelve ships of the line, was on its way out to Martinique, Hood was sent with the greater part of the fleet to blockade that island, which, owing to the loss of St. Eustatius, was in want of supplies, and to intercept the reinforcement. There had been some intention of sending him to reduce Curaçao, and Hood was very poorly pleased with the change of plan. It was not due, he wrote privately, to the intelligence sent by Captain John Linzee, but to Rodney's unwillingness to leave St. Eustatius. If Hood had gone to Curaçao, if Rear-Admiral Drake—the third in command—had gone to Demarara, then Rodney would have been obliged to blockade Martinique in person; and that he could not find in his heart to do.[1] It is not improbable that this was the foundation of the grudge which Hood certainly bore Rodney during the time they were together. His familiar letters to Mr. Jackson, the undersecretary to the admiralty, scarcely ever mention Rodney's name without some expression of bitterness or contempt, for which his alleged greed for the riches of St. Eustatius forms an ever-welling source. And yet there had been neither quarrel nor dispute between them; when Hood arrived on the station, the commander-in-chief met him as an old friend; and on Rodney's part, the feeling seems to have remained unaltered. He invariably spoke and wrote of Hood in terms of high commendation, though he can scarcely have been altogether ignorant of some of Hood's

[1] See *ante*, p. 303. *Letters of Sir Samuel Hood*, pp. 21, 22.

disparaging remarks. Unquestionably, he differed from Hood as to the best way of stationing the fleet for the blockade of Martinique, and exercised his undoubted right and duty as commander-in-chief, to have his own ideas carried out. Hood thought that his best station would be to windward of the island ; Rodney considered the position to leeward of the island better, because—amongst other reasons —any ships which he had to send to St. Lucia for provisions or water, would be always able to rejoin him in a few hours ; he would be able to concentrate his forces quicker than if he was to windward.

Hood's idea that the contemplated expeditions against Curaçao and Demerara were not given up on account of the intelligence sent by Captain Linzee, was not altogether correct, for it was solely that intelligence that made it appear necessary to blockade Martinique at all. At the same time it is possible that, if Rodney had not been detained at St. Eustatius, he would have undertaken the blockade himself, with a force quite equal to the work as he understood it. As things turned out, it was fortunate that the fleet was not divided in the way Hood had wished, for though the expected enemy did not arrive, another and more formidable one did.

With a large convoy, and a fleet of twenty ships of the line besides one of 54 guns, the Comte de Grasse had left Brest on the 22nd March, and arrived off Martinique on the 28th April, much to the surprise of Hood, who, in a letter to Jackson, speaks of his wonder that "so large a fleet and convoy should come on them without notice from England." Rodney had indeed already written to Vice-Admiral Parker at Jamaica, that the enemy were expecting a rein-

forcement of twenty-four sail of the line and ten thousand soldiers; but so little did he believe it that he had, apparently, not troubled to send the rumour to Hood. When De Grasse's fleet was first reported, Hood had with him only seventeen ships; an eighteenth had gone to St. Lucia the day before; and though she joined him with a despatch which he warmly commended, the French had three ships of the line and a 50-gun ship at Fort Royal, which would, of course, join De Grasse as soon as possible. If Hood could have kept in Fort Royal bay, as Rodney had suggested, this junction—with a timid tactician, like De Grasse, to deal with—might perhaps have been prevented; as it was, his fleet had fallen to leeward during the night; and on the morning of the 29th, when the French—stretching to the south in line abreast, with the convoy astern—were seen coming in between Martinique and Dominica, he was not in a position to offer any hindrance to them. As they passed the Diamond Rock they formed in line ahead towards the north, and were presently joined by the four ships out of Fort Royal. All that De Grasse wished was to get his convoy in safely; and though Hood was determined to contest it if he could, the odds of 24 or 25 to 18 were very heavy, and the weather-gage gave the enemy a tremendous advantage.

As the English, in line of battle, advanced towards the southward, the wind, coming through the open channel, headed them, and the leading ships fell off. Hood, seeing this, and being now abreast the French fleet, tacked to the northward on a line nearly parallel to that of the French; but the five ships in what was now the rear were somewhat separated from the others, and on these the French made

an attack with a great numerical superiority. Hood, with the rest of his line, tacked again, to support them, and the French retired. Clearly De Grasse ought to have seized the opportunity and attacked with all his force; but he remained content with getting the convoy safe into Fort Royal. It was one of the many opportunities which he had of seriously crippling the English fleet, for the neglect of which he received condign punishments a year later, on the 12th April; and it is well we should remember how much the success of that great day was due to De Grasse's tactical blunders, not only then, but during the whole of the preceding year.

The five ships which had borne the French attack had, nevertheless, received a good deal of damage. One, the Russell, was obliged to leave the fleet the same night, and with difficulty reached the admiral on the 4th May. Others got to St. Christopher's, and Hood, with the bulk of the fleet, joined Rodney at Antigua. His reputation was enormously increased by the result of the action. Under the great disadvantages of inferior numbers and the lee-gage, he had brought his fleet clear off, and friends and foes united in attributing this to his bold determined attitude. A correspondent, dating from the Carenage, of St. Lucia, on the 9th June wrote—

"It is with great pleasure I take the opportunity of offering my most sincere congratulations on the very many handsome remarks and expressions I daily hear poured forth from all parties respecting the spirited behaviour and well-conducted manœuvres of the British fleet under your command on the 29th April, which engaged with so superior a force of the enemy's. The first lieutenant of the Santa

Monica, who is just returned on his parole from St. Vincent, says that M. du Plassi, now governor of that island, and who came out with Comte de Grasse, expresses himself in the highest and most pointed terms on the well-directed manœuvring of the British fleet on that day, and, to repeat his own words, that Admiral Hood led his fleet like an angel." [1]

May and June passed without any further meeting between the two fleets, and early in July De Grasse went to Cape Français and thence to North America. By Rodney's return to England, it fell to Hood to command the squadron which was to follow him. But some of the worst ships had gone home with Rodney; some others, sent to Jamaica to refit, were detained there; and when Hood joined Rear-Admiral Graves, who was commanding at New York, he brought with him only fourteen ships and news that the French fleet might be expected any day. Graves had with him not more than five ships ready for sea; but when he learned that the French squadron which had been lying at Rhode Island had gone south, he assumed that it was to meet De Grasse and sailed at once in quest of it. Of De Grasse himself, or of what he meant to do, no intelligence could be gained.

This has often been spoken of as due to Washington's masterly strategy; it was, in reality, mainly due to Washington's ignorance. If the secret had been known at

[1] *Letters of Lord Hood*, p. 24. [The copy of the letter is not signed, and the name of the writer does not otherwise appear; but its being dated not from a ship, but from the Carenage, where the Thetis had just been lost, gives plausibility to the guess that the writer was her late captain, Robert Linzee, Hood's brother-in-law, who afterwards had an important command under him in the Mediterranean; a brother or cousin of Captain John Linzee, who has been already mentioned.]

Washington's headquarters, it would certainly have crossed over to Sir Henry Clinton's. As it was, Clinton, and Graves with him, were convinced that the allies intended to attack New York; which was in fact the plan of operations that had been agreed on between Washington and the Comte de Rochambeau, who commanded the French troops; both with the view of winning that very important place, and—perhaps still more—of taking the strain of the war off the Southern States, which were hardly pressed by the force under Lord Cornwallis. They had jointly written to De Grasse to this effect; but privately Rochambeau wrote, reminding him that D'Estaing had found it impossible to take his ships over the bar at Sandy Hook,[1] and submitting that an enterprise against Cornwallis in the Chesapeake held out better prospects of success. De Grasse's answer was not received till the middle of August, and on the 17th Washington wrote that all the available troops, French and American, would march south to meet and co-operate with him. It was the beginning of September before Washington's movements made Clinton aware of the change of plan. Graves had sailed on the 31st August.

De Grasse, though a timid tactician, was a bold strategist, and realizing the importance of the coming campaign, delayed the sailing of the convoy from the West Indies, left the settlements to defend themselves, and took every available ship to the coast of North America. On the 30th August he anchored in Lynnhaven Bay, just inside Cape Henry, with twenty-eight ships of the line. When on the 5th September, Graves, with nineteen, came off the mouth of the

[1] [See *ante*, p. 329.]

Chesapeake, he was able to leave four ships in the river to keep up the blockade of Cornwallis's army and to meet Graves outside with twenty-four. And Graves, though with the advantage of the wind, was not the man to make the best of the bad job. He waited till the French came out and formed their line of battle; then having his line nearly parallel to that of the French, he made the signal to engage. The van ran down and engaged closely; the English centre, where the admiral was, engaged also, but not so closely. Hood, who commanded in the rear, was also running down to engage, when, as it seemed to him and his division, the signal for the line was again hoisted. Keeping the van ship and the admiral's flag in one line necessarily prevented the rear getting into action; and thus, of Graves's nineteen ships, seven did not fire a shot. The result was that the leading English ships were severely mauled, and the French having gained a distinct tactical advantage, drew off and waited for the English to renew the attack. And this they were in no case to do. There was, of course, an angry controversy about this afterwards. Graves and the officers of the London, his flagship, declared that the signal for the line of battle was hauled down, and that no signal was flying but that for close action; while Hood and those with him were certain that the signal for the line was repeated with emphasis,[1] and that to keep the line and engage closely was absolutely impossible—as it evidently was.

[1] [The signal for the line of battle was a union flag (a jack) at the mizen-peak. It seems possible that after Graves had ordered the signal to be hauled down and had seen it hauled down, some too active-minded signalman hoisted the same flag again as a national emblem. This, however, is only a guess at the solution of what was the subject of a very angry controversy.]

It appears to us now, that being bound to disobey one of the signals, Hood should have disobeyed the first of these; but in the eighteenth century, strict obedience to the signal for the line of battle was officially held to be the most important; and no suspicion that he should have acted otherwise than he did ever crossed Hood's mind. He was far from being equally well pleased with Graves's conduct, and writing to Jackson said—

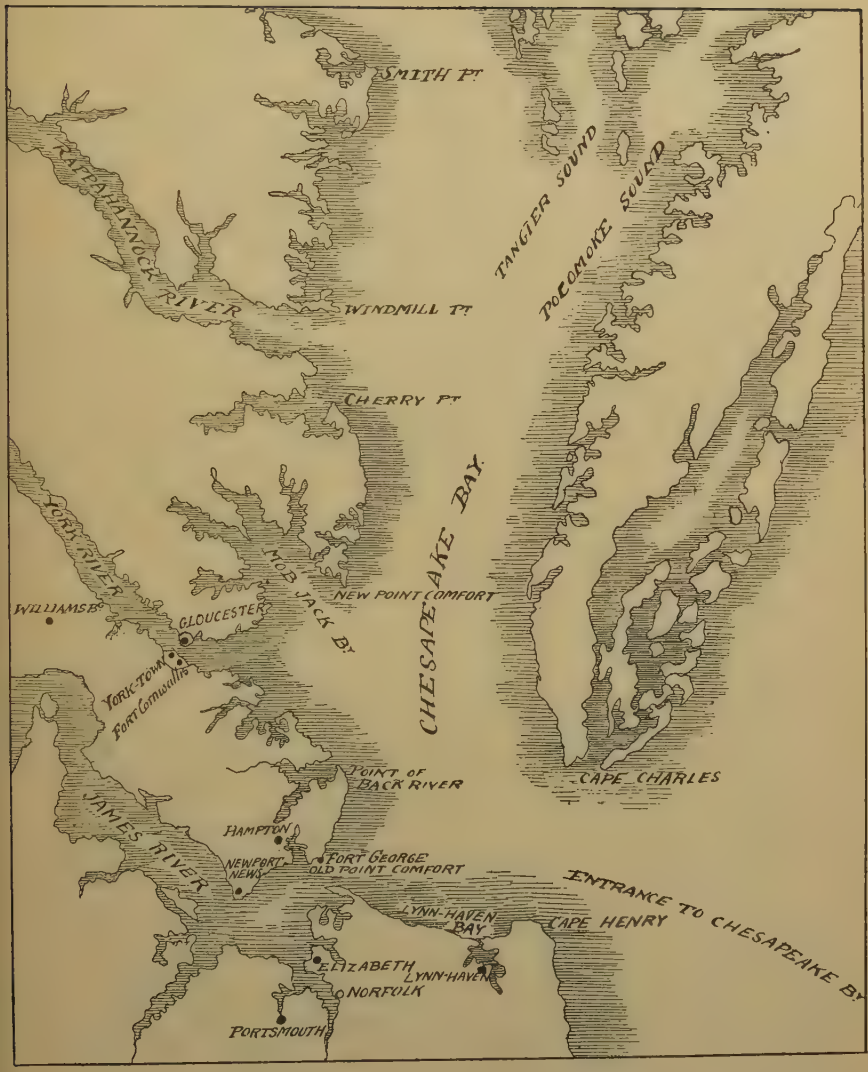
"They began to come out (from their anchorage) in a line of battle ahead, but by no means regular and connected, which afforded the British fleet a most glorious opening for making a close attack to manifest advantage, but it was not embraced."

And in this, he merely paraphrased a more detailed memorandum written the day after the battle—

"When the enemy's van was out, it was greatly extended beyond the centre and rear, and might have been attacked with the whole force of the British fleet. Had such an attack been made, several of the enemy's ships must have been inevitably demolished in half-an-hour's action, and there was a full hour and half to have engaged it before any of the rear could have come up."

It was not only the conduct of the action that he thought ill-judged: Graves's conduct of affairs afterwards pleased him still less—

"On the 7th and 8th, the enemy, being to windward, had an opportunity of attacking us if they pleased, but showed no sort of inclination for it. On the 9th they carried a press of sail, which proved to me beyond a doubt that De Grasse had other views than fighting, and I was distressed that Mr. Graves did not carry all the sail he could also, and



CHESAPEAKE BAY. [*To face page* 378.

endeavour to get off the Chesapeake before him; it appeared to me a measure of the utmost importance to keep the French out, and if they did get in they should first beat us. Instead of that, Mr. Graves put his Majesty's squadron on a contrary course just at dark, and at eight o'clock made the signal and lay-to."

The result of all this is painfully familiar. Graves, unable to assist Cornwallis,[1] returned to New York. De Grasse sent transports up the Chesapeake to the Head of Elk; met there the army under Washington and Rochambeau, brought it down and landed it in the face of Yorktown; and Cornwallis, thus hemmed in by sea and land, surrendered on the 19th October. The independence of the colonies was virtually won.

Early in November Hood sailed for Barbados, carrying with him his own thirteen ships—the fourteenth, the Terrible, had been sunk by Graves's orders off Cape Henry after the battle of the 5th September—and four others which he, with some difficulty, persuaded Rear-Admiral Digby, the new commander-in-chief, to let him have. It has been already[2] pointed out, but it will bear repetition, that very great harm was done to English interests by the undue division of command. North America, the Leeward Islands and Jamaica, three localities geographically and strategically united, were put under three different commanders-in-chief, each inclined to look to the interests

[1] [It will be remembered that Graves had no information, showing him the extreme and immediate importance of relieving Cornwallis, and as a dull though honest and brave man, did not appreciate it aright. Hood seems to have done so, but intuitively; certainly not of positive knowledge; but he was unfortunately only second in command.]

[2] See *ante*, p. 299.

of his own petty corner rather than to the needs of the station as a whole.[1] Rodney, by his high rank and masterful disposition, had not scrupled to take North America under his command; but Hood was only an acting commander-in-chief, and he was junior to Graves, to Digby, and to Parker; and thus he was obliged to go to North America with only fourteen ships, because Parker chose to keep some at Jamaica; and he was now obliged to leave North America with only seventeen, because Digby could not understand that the war with France and Spain was to be decided in the West Indies; nor, having reluctantly allowed four ships to go with Hood, could he see the necessity of keeping the arrangement secret. "It was so easy a matter," Hood wrote, "to have prevented any captain from knowing it till his ship was at sea." As they were permitted to know it, without any warning, they mentioned it freely enough on shore, and Hood had no doubt that the intelligence was at once despatched to De Grasse who had sailed some days before.

"I am most exceeding sorry for it," he wrote; "if De Grasse had understood that I was bringing with me only

[1] At the present time; these three are united under one commander-in-chief; but in another part of the world, the command is divided in a way that could scarcely fail to cause serious difficulty in time of war. China and the East Indies have essentially the same interests; Australia and the Pacific are necessarily united with them; and it would save much trouble and much personal friction if it was distinctly and officially understood that the senior of the four was authorized to command in chief when the occasion arose. The Russian admiral's command extends over all these stations; so, also, I believe, does the French. In former days, the division of prize-money was an almost insuperable difficulty in the way of thus linking separate stations together. It ought not to prove so now.

fourteen ships, and had found me with eighteen, great and manifest advantage to the king's service might have arisen therefrom; but whether I have fourteen or eighteen, as long as he knows exactly what force I have, he will naturally take care in either case, to have four or five more;"

which would be easy; for, having been joined in the Chesapeake by the eight ships from Rhode Island, he had now gone to the West Indies with thirty-six. Four he detached to Cape Français: with the rest he went to Fort Royal, where he arrived on the 26th November.

Hood reached Barbados on the 5th December with several of his ships in a very crippled condition; three in want of new lower-masts, and no lower-masts were to be had. Keeping watch on the enemy at Fort Royal by his frigates and smaller vessels, he had news, on the 8th January, 1782, that they had put to sea on the 5th. For a week he could get no further intelligence; but on the 14th, a letter from the Governor of St. Kitts brought him word that on the 10th "a very large fleet of men-of-war and transports had been seen from the hills of Nevis." He immediately put to sea, writing on the way, "I shall be twenty-two strong, with which I will seek and give battle to the Count De Grasse, be his numbers as they may." On the 25th January he arrived off St. Kitts and saw the French fleet of twenty-nine sail of the line with three 50-gun ships.[1] As he came past the island of Nevis, De

[1] [The numbers are very differently given, even by the French writers. The explanation is that De Grasse first arrived on the 14th with twenty-six, but that others—left behind at Fort Royal, detached to Cape Français, or fresh from France—kept coming in day by day, till by the 14th February there were no fewer than thirty-eight. As to the number on the 25th, Hood very well knew a line-of-battle

Grasse got under way and formed his fleet in line of battle. Hood had already seen the necessity of establishing free intercourse with the shore; so now—in his own words—

"I made every symptom of attack, which drew De Grasse further from the shore, and as I had a fair prospect of gaining the anchorage he had left, and well knowing it was the only chance I had of saving the island, I pushed for it and succeeded by having my rear and part of my centre engaged. The enemy gave a preference to Commodore Affleck (who commanded the rear); but he kept up so noble a fire and was so well supported by his seconds, Captain Cornwallis and Lord Robert Manners, that the loss and damages sustained by those ships were but trifling."

De Grasse, naturally exasperated at having been so completely out-manœuvred, made two separate attacks on Hood the next day, one from van to rear, the other on the centre and rear, which had been strengthened in anticipation; but both attacks were repulsed with no very great loss on our part. The French, it was believed, suffered much more heavily. Hood remained at this anchorage till —the island having capitulated on the 12th February— the enemy began erecting a battery and placing mortars on the shore. On the 14th the French fleet, now mustering thirty-eight sail of the line, anchored off Nevis; a combined attack was impending; but the same night at eleven o'clock, by concerted agreement and without signal, the English ships cut their cables and proceeded to sea, unseen

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ship when he saw one; and when he says there were twenty-nine, it would take some exceedingly strong evidence to prove that there were not.]

by the French only four or five miles distant. Hood's conduct of the fleet, in presence of an enemy of such overwhelming superiority of force, excited the highest admiration. Lord Robert Manners, the captain of the Resolution, wrote to his brother, the Duke of Rutland, that—

"The taking possession of the road was well judged, well conducted and well executed, though indeed the French had an opportunity—which they missed—of bringing our rear to a very severe account. The van and centre divisions brought to an anchor under the fire of the rear, which was engaged with the enemy's centre, and then, the centre being at an anchor and properly placed, covered us while we anchored, making, I think, the most masterly manœuvre I ever saw."

And in a later letter—

"Taking the whole in one light, though not successful in the point we aimed at, nevertheless it was well conducted, and has given the enemy a pretty severe check; and if you give him half the credit the enemy does, Sir Samuel Hood will stand very high in the public estimation. Their sea-officers say it was a bold and well-conducted attempt; but they were sure our getting possession of Basse-Terre Road could be of no consequence, as they knew we had not troops sufficient to relieve the place. . . . The Marquis de Bouillé, St. Simon and the land-officers set no bounds to their praises."[1]

What Hood did at St. Kitts was, however, not merely the result of a quick comprehension; or rather, the comprehension was assisted by forethought. Four months

[1] *Letters of Lord Hood*, pp. 79, 82. ["L'amiral Hood profita de la faute du comte de Grasse avec un coup d'œil et une habileté qui lui faisaient le plus grand honneur."—Chevalier, *Histoire de la Marine française*, p. 283.]

before he had written that this very thing was what, in his opinion, Graves ought to have done at the Chesapeake. We may assume that, if he had been in command, he would have done it, even if he had not begun by smashing De Grasse as he came out, before the rear could support the van. But with the English fleet, instead of the French, anchored in Lynnhaven Bay, the whole situation would have been changed. The allied forces would not have been brought down by water from the Head of Elk; and if, after a weary land march, they could have arrived in front of York-town, they would have found themselves without stores, without siege-train, encamped under the very guns of the English ships. Cornwallis would certainly not have been forced to surrender at that time and in that way.

So much has been said of late years of the power of "a fleet in being" to prevent territorial aggression, that it is well to point out that we have in this conquest of St. Kitts by the French, an instance of a conquest carried out under the very eyes of "the fleet in being" interposed between the enemy's land and sea forces. It differs, undoubtedly, in many respects, from those instances usually contemplated; in nothing, perhaps, more than in this—that the landing force required was very small, for the defending force was insignificant. The transport and landing of 8000 men is a very different operation from the transport and landing of 100,000 or 150,000; the invasion of a small island like St. Kitts, with a mongrel, dissatisfied and half-mutinous population, stands on a very different footing from the invasion of a powerful and united kingdom. Still, the difference and the exception may be

held to show that it is impossible to lay down an absolute rule such as has been spoken of; every case must be considered with reference to its own peculiar conditions.

After leaving St. Kitts Hood went to Barbados, where he was presently joined by Rodney, who now resumed the command, Hood remaining as before, in the second post. The reinforcements which Rodney had brought out put the English fleet on a numerical equality with that of De Grasse, and Rodney proceeded to Gros Islet Bay, in St. Lucia, to watch the movements of the French. When they sailed on the 8th April, the news reached him within a few hours, and he followed. On the 9th he was up with them under the lee of Dominica, where the partial calms and flaws of wind permitted De Grasse to fall heavily on the van commanded by Hood; the centre and rear, at a little distance and in full sight, being unable to approach or support it. It was one more chance that De Grasse had to cripple his enemy, but he allowed it to pass. Hood's ships had indeed defended themselves stoutly, but they might have been and ought to have been overwhelmed by numbers; even as it was, they suffered a good deal of damage, and Rodney, to give them a little time to be put in repair, reversed the order of the fleet, placing the third division under Rear-Admiral Drake,[1] in the van. Rodney explained this in a friendly note to Hood, who replied—

"My dear Sir George,

"My first and greatest wish is to comply with yours. Whatever disposition you think right to make respecting my division will be most readily and cheerfully acquiesced

[1] [A descendant of Sir Francis Drake's younger brother, Thomas.]

in by me. The good of the king's service will always be a primary consideration with me. No other can ever stand in competition with it. I hope we shall do most effectual business to-morrow."

They did. "To-morrow" was the celebrated 12th April, and the French fleet was completely defeated—scattered to the winds—and De Grasse, the French admiral, taken prisoner, actually by Hood. The Ville de Paris, the only French three-decker ever taken in battle, had been engaged by many English ships, and was severely beaten; but she struck her flag only to the Barfleur. It was then a little after six o'clock. Rodney's letter to Hood, written within an hour, is worth quoting—

"*12th April, 7 o'clock, p.m.*

"Many thanks, my dear friend, for your very kind congratulations; 'tis with the sincerest truth that I must, with great justice, acknowledge that I am indebted to your very gallant behaviour that we have been so successful. You have a right and may demand whatever officers you choose for preferment, either as captains or lieutenants.

"I had wrote on our first rencounter, wherein I had done you every justice to our gracious master. To-day must add greatly to it; and I am sure there cannot be anything but you may expect from his goodness. God bless you. Adieu.

"Yours most affectionately,

"G. B. RODNEY."

But notwithstanding this, Hood was excessively mortified that more was not made of the victory. He thought that, when the French line was shattered, early in the afternoon, Rodney ought to have made the signal for a general

chase. "Had he so done," he wrote, "I am very confident we should have had twenty sail of the enemy's ships of the line before dark." He thought that the pursuit ought to have been continued through the night, "so as never to have lost sight of the enemy, which would clearly and most undoubtedly have enabled him to have taken almost every ship the next day." And he said something very like this to Rodney himself on the next day, the 13th, to which Rodney replied—"Come, we have done very handsomely as it is."

There is much in Hood's view which commends itself to popular acceptance; it is clear that what he proposed might have led to overwhelming success; but it might have led to serious disaster. The risk was very great. Rodney had no assurance that a part of the enemy's fleet —sufficient to endanger the Leeward Islands—might not be passed by and left behind. Four ships, with troops on board, were at Guadeloupe. Half-a-dozen more might have done incalculable mischief, when the English fleet was away to leeward without a possibility of returning; for there was nothing behind; the islands had no garrison worth speaking of; they had no defence; their safety rested on the fleet alone. It can be said now that no French ships did remain; it cannot be said that none would have remained if Rodney had acted differently. And as it was, the result was decisive. Jamaica was saved. The French fleet was broken up for the time; and though in the course of months it was able again to venture to sea, the idea of aggression seems to have been thoroughly thrashed out of it. Diplomacy, too, was put on a more satisfactory footing. The American colonies

could not, indeed, be retained; their independence had been won off the Chesapeake; but as to France or Spain, we could hold a totally different language after the 12th April. And so, dragging on for a year longer without materially altering the position, the war came to an end.

In the year after his return to England, Lord Hood—his share in the victory of the 12th April had been rewarded with an Irish peerage—was elected member of parliament for Westminster. He was for the most part a silent member; but on one noteworthy occasion—the motion for the impeachment of Warren Hastings—he spoke with characteristic directness. He called—

the serious attention of the House to the consequences of proceeding with too scrupulous a nicety to investigate the conduct of those who had filled stations of high difficulty and important trust. Certain actions which appeared to those at a distance in a very criminal light, were yet, on nearer investigation, perfectly justifiable on the grounds of absolute and indispensable necessity. Should the fear of an impeachment by parliament be hung out to every commander in whose hands was placed the defence of our national possessions, it must necessarily operate as a dangerous restraint to their exertions, when it was considered that no general or admiral had scarcely ever been fortunate enough to conduct himself in the performance of his duty without occasionally falling into circumstances which compelled him to do things not strictly legal, but from the necessities of the situation perfectly justifiable.

It is easy to suppose that as he spoke he had the somewhat parallel case of Rodney and Vaughan at St. Eustatius in his mind.

In 1788 Hood was appointed one of the lords of the

admiralty; and in 1791 commander-in-chief of the fleet known as "the Russian armament," which, however, was paid off in the autumn. In the spring of 1793 the war with revolutionary France began, and Hood was at once appointed to command the fleet sent out to the Mediterranean, where, in addition to the important duty of naval commander-in-chief he found himself obliged to act as civil commissioner on the occupation of Toulon, and as chief of a coalition of the most discordant elements. Toulon declared for a monarchical government, Louis XVII, and the white flag, and sent a deputation to Hood, appealing for support. Hood, on his part, solemnly engaged to hold the town in the name and on behalf of Louis XVII, and to restore the fleet on the conclusion of peace. The English fleet entered the outer roads of Toulon on the 29th August, and was followed, within a few hours, by the Spanish fleet, bringing a considerable body of troops. The allies then took possession of the city and the forts, Rear-Admiral Goodall being appointed governor. The French Rear-Admiral Trogoff, with the ships he commanded, put himself under Hood's orders, and some 4000 seamen from the western ports were embarked in four 74-gun ships, provided with passports from Hood, and sent away to Rochefort, Lorient, and Brest.

The difficulties of Hood's position, however, were excessive. There was no cordiality between him and Langara,[1] the Spanish admiral, even if he did not suspect Langara of treacherous double-dealing with the French government. The officer in command of some Neapolitans was still less

[1] The same whom Rodney had so signally defeated between St. Vincent and Cadiz. See *ante*, p. 294.

to his liking; and the 16,000 troops, nominally under his orders, for the defence of the place, were a heterogeneous crowd of different nationalities and languages, of whom about 2000 only were British; the rest were Spaniards, Neapolitans, Piedmontese, and French. Even if they had all been trustworthy, the number was quite inadequate to defend an *enceinte* of fifteen miles against an organized attack. The wonder is rather that they resisted for seven weeks. When Fort Mulgrave and the heights commanding the town were captured by the besiegers on the 17th December, the place was no longer tenable, and orders were given for the evacuation. But the number of languages, nationalities, and commanders-in-chief could not but produce confusion; and though several thousands of the loyal inhabitants were embarked, it was impossible to carry away all who might seem guilty to the republican leaders. The Spaniards undertook to destroy the ships in the inner harbour, with the arsenal, magazines, and stores; but failed, whether from incompetence or treachery. Sir Sidney Smith, however, carried out part of the neglected programme and burnt the arsenal, buildings, and stores and ten ships of the line—some of which were afterwards recovered and repaired. Three ships of the line with some frigates and corvettes, ready for sea, and a vast crowd of merchant ships of all sizes, accompanied the English in their retreat.

The arsenal in flames, powder magazines exploding, the galley slaves broken loose, the wretched inhabitants—old men, women, children—crowding to the beach, entreating to be saved; the republican soldiers, mad with rage, drunk with blood, running wild through the city—all combined to

make a scene of horror such as has few parallels in history. For twenty-four hours, the place was given up to the soldier and the convict, and for several weeks the butchery of the citizens was continued.[1] In popular estimation Hood was then and has since been severely blamed for not taking timely precautions against a catastrophe which he ought to have foreseen, and for the safety of a people who had trusted to him. Such blame would be fully due, if he had been commander-in-chief in fact, as in name; but as it was, with Spaniards and Neapolitans cowardly forsaking their post, with the French refusing to obey orders, all suspicious of each other and of the English most of all, all trusting to the never-failing "to-morrow" for things to right themselves, it will be seen that—far from blame—Hood and the English officers deserve very great credit for doing as much as they did.

Even before the fall of Toulon, Hood had been in communication with Paoli, the leader of the insurgent Corsicans, and for some weeks a strict blockade had been enforced by Captain Nelson of the Agamemnon. In concert with General Dundas, commanding the troops, he now determined to take more active measures for the reduction of the island, and early in February 1794 seized on San Fiorenzo and the celebrated tower of Mortella which, by

[1] [It is always difficult to arrive at anything like exact numbers, in such cases; but the most moderate French estimate put the number *officially* killed at more than 1000. "Plus de mille personnes périrent par la fusillade ou par la guillotine. Dans ce nombre figuraient des femmes et des jeunes filles" (Chevalier, *Histoire de la Marine française sous la première République*, p. 89); and this without counting the many who were slaughtered *unofficially*. The number carried away by the English ships and the French ships and boats which accompanied them, is put at 15,000.]

previously beating off the 74-gun ship Fortitude and the frigate Juno of 36 guns, gave a prestige to towers of the kind, which were afterwards copied along our own shores. After this Hood proposed to attack Bastia, but Dundas positively refused to co-operate; nor could anything that Hood, or Sir Gilbert Elliot, the chief civil commissioner, urged, move him from his determination. To besiege a town was not strictly work for the fleet unaided, but Hood would not be baulked; and whilst the ships kept up a close blockade, preventing any supplies or reinforcements being thrown into the town, the marines, soldiers serving as marines, seamen as gunners and some as small-arm men, formed an effective force on shore, to which was added the appearance rather than the reality of a considerable body of insurgent Corsicans, who were, however, useful in enforcing the blockade by land. The capture of Bastia is perhaps best known by the brilliant share which Nelson had in the achievement; but to speak of it—as is often done—as though it was effected solely by Nelson and the seamen landed with him, is unjust to Lieutenant-Colonel Villettes and the soldiers he commanded—a more numerous body than the seamen; and absurd, as putting on one side the still more important work done by the fleet. Bastia was not taken by storm, but yielded to the stress brought on it, by the blockade more even than the active attack; and the conduct of the whole enterprise from first to last, the responsibility of acting in opposition to the opinion of the more experienced land officers, was Hood's and Hood's alone.

A few days later, the 6th June, the French fleet under Rear-Admiral Martin put to sea from Toulon. Martin,

though not much of an officer, was a seaman and understood the enormous difference between the ships he commanded and those to which he was opposed; and though compelled by the convention to sail, he had no desire to meet Hood at sea. So when the English fleet came in sight, he promptly withdrew into Golfe Jouan, or as it was then called by the English, Gourjean Bay. Hood, whose force, not only in quality but in numbers, was vastly superior, would have attacked immediately. But the wind died away, and for the next few days, calms and fitful gusts prevented any movement. Before the weather suited, Martin had so strengthened his position by batteries on the islands, that Hood judged an attack on it unadvisable; and so leaving some ships to watch Martin's fleet he returned to Corsica, where a party of seamen, under Nelson, was co-operating with the soldiers, now commanded by Sir Charles Stuart, in the siege of Calvi. When it fell on the 10th August, the whole island submitted to the English.

The work of the past year had been very trying, and Hood, who was now within a few months of seventy, felt the need of rest. As no active measures were contemplated immediately, he obtained leave to return to England for the winter; a short time at Bath would, he thought, completely restore him. It seems to have done so, and in the following spring he again hoisted his flag on board the Victory and was on the point of sailing. But he had learnt that the French, by great exertions through the previous year and the winter, had got together a fleet numerically superior to the English; and in view of the many duties which the English fleet was called on to perform, he

considered it was absolutely necessary that it should be reinforced. As the admiralty did not at the moment agree with him on this point, he urged his opinions in a manner which they disapproved of and ordered him to strike his flag. "Oh, miserable board of admiralty!" exclaimed Nelson, when he heard of it: "they have forced the first officer in our service away from his command;" and a few days later, he wrote—"the fleet must regret the loss of Lord Hood, the best officer, take him altogether, that England has to boast of; equally great in all situations which an admiral can be placed in."

It was the end of his active service; and though in the following year appointed Governor of Greenwich Hospital, and raised to the peerage of Great Britain as Viscount Hood of Catherington, it is not surprising that he felt very sore at the way he had been treated, which indeed appeared still worse, as within a few weeks of removing him from his command, the admiralty were obliged to send out a considerable reinforcement to his successor. This bitterness appears in a letter which he wrote to a friend who had asked for his assistance to get a ship. It is dated the 2nd August 1796.

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to assist your wishes in any respect whatever. . . . But to be candid with you, I can be of no use to any one; for Lord Spencer is not content with marking me with indifference and inattention, but carries it to all who have any connection with me. You will therefore do well, in any application you make to his lordship, not to make mention of my name. I have neither seen nor spoken to his lordship since my flag was struck, and look upon myself as thrown upon the shelf for ever. It may be right it should be so.

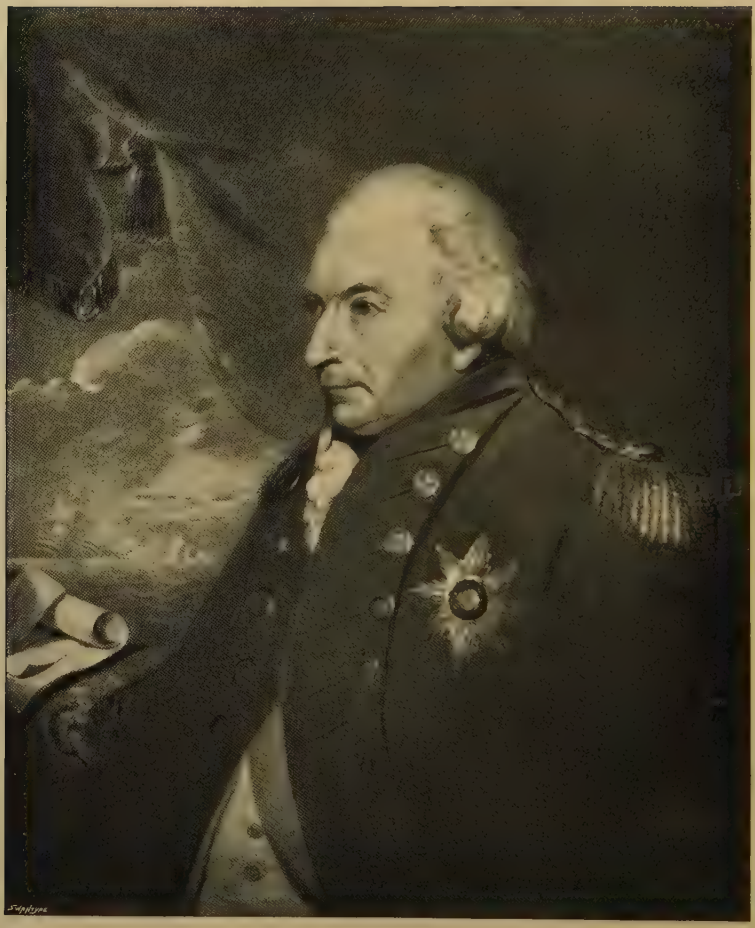
But a consciousness of having discharged my duty with zeal and industry, as a faithful servant to the public in the several situations in which I have had the honour to be placed, will bear me up against the treatment I have, and must ever think most undeservedly, received, and will not fail to cheer my declining years."

He held the post of Governor of the Hospital for nearly twenty years, and died, in his 92nd year, on the 27th January 1816.

The reader of the present day is apt to imagine that Hood's best claim to distinction is as the tutor and precursor of Nelson. To a great extent he was so; when Nelson was admitted to his intimacy, he could tell him, as no other man could—about the failure of Graves off the Chesapeake, of De Grasse's failure at St. Kitts, of Rodney's on the night of the 12th April. St. Kitts and Golfe Jouan were preliminary studies for Aboukir Bay; the lesson of the Chesapeake bore fruit at Trafalgar; and surely we may trace the voice of Hood murmuring against Rodney in Nelson's celebrated—"Had we taken ten sail and had allowed the eleventh to escape when it had been possible to have got at her, I could never have called it well done." No one can study the stories of the two men without seeing how much Nelson owed to Hood. Hood, on the other hand, owed nothing to Nelson; received nothing from him except the good and zealous service. When Nelson was still a very young captain, Hood was distinguishing himself above all his fellows in the American war—the men with whom he comes most distinctly in comparison; above Howe; above even Rodney. He had never, indeed, the opportunity of these in commanding in chief in a great

battle; but from what he did, from what he wanted to do, from what he complained of others not doing, we may believe that brilliant as were the victories of the 12th April and the 1st June, they would have been still more so had Hood been in command. He had not the affectionate nature of Nelson, nor the gift peculiar to Nelson of winning affection; but he could make himself understood and obeyed; and we may readily believe that, with Nelson's opportunities, triumphs such as Nelson's would have rendered his name even more illustrious than it now is.

ST. VINCENT



St. Vincent.

XI

THE EARL OF ST. VINCENT

Of late years in the navy, the life, character, and services of John Jervis, first Earl St. Vincent, have received more attention and appreciation than was formerly the case. It is felt that while his greatness has been dimmed by the light of a brighter star, there is reason to believe that, in the binary group, preponderance in weight belonged to Jervis, if brilliancy predominated in Nelson. The older man, we feel, made the fleet that the younger man used with such effect; and the two went together to build up that frame of national greatness on which only Wellington worked with equal power, and with whom only Washington competed in rivalry.

But the feelings with which we contemplate the part that Jervis played, and those with which we approach the review of Nelson's career, are very different. In the latter case we are in the presence of a nature less commanding than persuasive; less directive than encouraging; more disposed to win by sympathy, and to create enthusiasm by attracting affection, than to isolate itself in the exercise of will. We meet one who is not self-contained and standing apart in reticent consciousness of power, but flowing over with the

desire to bring all men to his side in a common sacrifice. In our regard for Nelson there is pity for an imperfect and suffering humanity; awe at the splendour of so great a spirit; wonder at the sublime combination of two such opposite characteristics.

There is little in Jervis' character, or life, to excite our sympathy. We must generally admire him at a distance, almost afraid to allow the presence of foibles; and when we must allow them, more provoked than sympathetic; more inclined to smile at them than to weep with them. His individualities are almost all above us. We know him as a man who would have imposed his will upon us without caring whether we sympathized with it or not; and yet we know we should have recognized it as a righteous will. Jervis compelled obedience because all felt that he would go any lengths to enforce it. In all questions of command he stood apart and alone. It was nothing to him whether those placed under his authority were willing servants, or the reverse. All were servants, and should go as his interpretation of service demanded. Nelson's conception of the admiral and his captains being a band of brothers, to go forward on an enterprise in a sympathetic company, might be very proper for a young man under his command; but that was not Jervis' way of looking at it. He understood that his captains were a team to be driven. He was proud of a high-couraged, mettlesome group; but he would never drop the reins, or cease to let his horses feel the bit, though he must humour the willing ones. Late in his life he summed up his general view. "Think or do, write or say, what they might or chose, he was determined that while he commanded . . . his captains should perform

their duty," and their duty was, of course, his view of it.

While Nelson was perpetually distrusting his instinctive judgment, criticizing it, coming back to it, and viewing alternatives, it did not occur to St. Vincent to think he could mistake; but when he palpably mistook, he reversed his judgment with scarce a consciousness of the act. If things went wrong, they were to be put right by the exercise of his will and power. If they still went wrong, it was no fault of his method: that was absolute and unchangeable.

But there never was a warmer or more genial nature than that of John Jervis. The profound sense of the greatness of his office; the wide political view, never lacking the support of party prejudice, which always presented, even perhaps in an exaggerated form, the consequences of lapse, put away from his mind its own individuality, and made him more and more an unerring machine in all that related to command. The biographers of Jervis allow themselves to dwell upon what they call the "natural" sternness of his disposition. Doubtless sternness of thought and demeanour predominated, especially during the later years of his service as a sailor and as a statesman; but it is not easy to allow that sternness was the natural characteristic. The facts that it grew and developed under conditions calculated to foster it, was almost absent when these did not appear, and evidently passed off with the strain of official life, are against the theory. Originally employed as an adaptation of histrionic power to the purposes of government, Jervis cultivated the forms of sternness when he felt none of it. The habit grew till men surrounding him, and he himself, failed to recognize

its artificial genesis. We can see where it came from and how it was developed. We know that the spontaneous side of his character was warmth of feeling, toleration, charity, and a strong sense of humour.

Expressive as Nelson's face was, that of St. Vincent, viewed in the light of his life, was more so. While in his full vigour, his face—always wonderfully mobile—conveyed the idea of immense confidence and self-reliance. It was a face capable of the sternest threatening, but it is impossible not to recognize the excessive kindness of the expression in repose, while humour dances in the resolute blue eyes.

The interest, even perhaps the value, of biography lies between the life lived and the liver of it; between the things done, and the doer of them; and however brief the sketch may be, it should keep the boundaries in touch on either side.

In every character there is perhaps a culminating point. Up to a certain stage the personage is building up, while it is marking its way in historical events. As a character, it reaches perfection at some time which is perhaps clearly indicated; but it does not follow that its greatest acts coincide with that period. In Lord St. Vincent's case, however, it was so. He was at his very best in the time which included the battles of St. Vincent, Camperdown, and the Nile, and neither before nor after that period do we experience such perfect satisfaction in contemplating his words and acts as we can then enjoy. Until then the progress of his character and the history of his life are both on the ascending curve. Afterwards the smoothness of the line is broken, it is drawn with a wavering and

undetermined hand, and it is not even, till the pleasant level of a country retirement is reached. And the reasons why it should be so are plain enough. Until his health began to fail, and he resigned the command of the Mediterranean fleet in 1799, Jervis had met no obstacles that were not easily removed by the employment of his method, and the exertion of his will. During the rest of his service, whether in the fleet or at the admiralty, the obstacles grew, shook the method, and did not always succumb to the will. A certain strain of bitterness, augmenting in strength and persistence, arose in a temper so long free from it; and as there was no yielding possible, the outer character did not mellow as the years went on. The retreat to Rochetts in 1807, and the calm of sixteen years spent there, was as necessary to preserve the balance of our judgment on a nearly perfect career, as the sacrifice of a life was to veil the faults of the other great sailor.

Biographers in their endeavours to exalt the subjects of their praise are sometimes unjust to their memories. They are apt to introduce superhuman elements in such a way as to dull our interest in an abnormal, if not an impossible growth. Barrow carelessly quotes the statement of one of the Parker family to the effect that Anson set out in the navy without patronage, and won his way to a peerage and the post of first lord of the admiralty unaided. But the nephew of the Earl of Macclesfield could hardly have been so placed, and we do not lose interest in the circumnavigator and sailor-statesman by learning so elementary a truth about him. So it has been with the biographers of the Jervis who rose to the same great positions. The intention is to make us believe that he

went to sea friendless and penniless. It has been imagined that attention is aroused by such a statement, when it is, in fact, dulled, as we lose the sense of cause and effect unless the special acts which made the young career are fully before us.

In normal times a certain ascent is open to the individual, but if the topmost rung of the ladder is to be reached, the early steps must receive support. This was pre-eminently the case with Lord St. Vincent. He entered the navy as a near connection of Lord Anson, who had come to the admiralty three years before he went to sea in 1748; and who was first lord for something like nine years of Jervis' early naval life. It was most likely to Anson's patronage that Jervis' father owed his place of counsel to the admiralty, and auditor of Greenwich Hospital; and Anson's fostering hand is plainly visible in the son's career until at least he reached post rank in 1760. It is stated that two great ladies were interested in his naval genesis—Lady Burghley and Lady Archibald Hamilton—Lord Archibald Hamilton being Anson's colleague at the admiralty. The Hon. Samuel Barrington turned out to be one of Jervis' dearest friends; he must have been his early patron. He was the son of Lord Barrington, who was Anson's friend and colleague at the admiralty. Jervis was made a lieutenant as soon as he had passed his examination, and was immediately appointed to the Prince, fitting at Chatham for Lord Anson's flag on an alarm of war. The captain of the Prince was Charles Saunders, who had been Anson's first lieutenant in the voyage round the world. Anson had put him into parliament for the borough of Heydon, and was "his steady and constant friend."

There was no war after all, and the Prince only remained a few months in commission. But she was the most marked ship in the navy, and was visited by all the leading people in the country, whose acquaintance young Jervis no doubt made.

All the interest in the world would not have given Jervis his original character, but Captain Saunders, specially brought into a flag promotion in order that he might become second in command in the Mediterranean to repair the failure of Byng, could not have been alone influenced by character when he took young Jervis with him. Nor can we forget the double tie when we find Sir Charles Saunders taking his *protégé* home to be his first lieutenant in the Prince, when ordered to hoist his flag in her for an expedition against the French in North America. It followed, almost as a matter of course, that Jervis should have the first vacancy, and he accordingly became commander of the Porcupine sloop, before the attack on Quebec in 1759, in the eleventh year of his service and the twenty-fourth of his age.

It is not mere desire for truth which obliges us to dwell upon the excellent help that Jervis received in his early years. His character, when formed, was made up of that which was original to it, and that which was developed by his surroundings. To suppose that Jervis could have become St. Vincent after a struggle for life in subordinate ranks is to mistake human nature. He could not have become what he was had he not begun life surrounded by friends who put opportunities in his way, and were ever ready to secure him in each position that he made for himself.

James Wolfe and Jervis had been school-fellows. Wolfe was Sir Charles Saunders' guest in the Prince, and there a friendship which, from difference of age, must have been that of protector and protected at school, was renewed and cemented. The dangers of the St. Lawrence were magnified by the naval commanders[1] to an extent deplored by Wolfe. Jervis' warm heart, alike with his independent spirit, must have combated prevailing doubts. The man left to himself would have led anywhere. The naval and military friends led the transports in the Porcupine, and so took the first step towards the dear-bought victory at Quebec. The soldier fell; and the sailor friend bore the last expressions of tenderness and the last souvenirs to the bereaved mistress.

Still placed in the forefront, as was now, in any case, his due, Jervis was sent home and out again, probably with despatches both ways. Before setting out on his return voyage he had what was perhaps his first encounter with insubordination. His men, for reasons good or bad, refused to weigh. But a strong will and a trusty boat's-crew gained the day by a display of determination, after which the young commander remained master of the crew of the Albany.

Even had he been friendless, Jervis' lead in the Porcupine had earned him his post rank; and so soon as by the rule of service he could be, he was made a captain at the age of twenty-five, and given command of the Gosport, a 44-gun

[1] [But Saunders and many with him must, in their youth, have often heard how, in 1711, the whole expedition under Sir Hovenden Walker had narrowly escaped destruction, and had been obliged to withdraw from the St. Lawrence after losing several transports and nearly 1000 men.]

ship. There was nothing of note in this command, and at the close of the war in 1763 she was paid off.

Post rank was then something more secure than it is now. It was a real "taking post," according to which flag rank followed. Friends might still help in the way of securing employment, and the class of employment, but the future career of a very young captain was as certain then as it is now; and thenceforward, character, conduct, and fortune were perhaps more powerful than friends.

Arriving at this point, and rendering it quite clear that there were plenty of friends who omitted nothing to make the early steps of the naval career easy and assured, a word is wanting on the question of pennilessness. In his old age, St. Vincent was used continually to dwell upon the financial depletion of his younger days. It may be conceded that until his capture of the Pégase in 1782, he was never a man of fortune, and that even when he died he was only a man of moderate fortune; but it seems in the highest degree unlikely that, situated as he was, he could have been altogether destitute of pecuniary help either in coin or kind. He is said to have claimed that he never had a penny but £20 supplied him when he first went to sea. He is said also to have claimed to carry out an extensive round of travel on a half-pay not probably exceeding eight shillings a day. Perhaps the majority of the naval officers of his time lived upon their pay and half-pay; but then the majority were not, from the first, moving on terms of intimacy, if not of equality, with all the leading Whigs. That was hardly a society in which a simple half-pay officer could flourish, and it is easier to suppose the old chief forgetful of things gone by more than half a

century, which a natural pride would tempt to forget, than something like miraculous financial ability where there were no accounts, and a strong inaptitude for figures. Jervis was a man whose passions and personal desires were absolutely under control. His personal expenditure must have been always as small as it could be consistently with his position. But a rising man in society thrown upon a small pittance, must either have run into debt or have lost himself in penuriousness. Jervis did neither ; and if he lived on what the service allowed him without severe anxieties—of which no trace remains—there must have been times when his wants were otherwise supplied.

After six years' half-pay, Jervis was placed in command of the Alarm, a 32-gun frigate chiefly employed in the Mediterranean. She was nearly wrecked at Marseilles, and Jervis' skill and conduct on the occasion were greatly commended. He was probably long before this date a strong politician, a Whig of the Whigs. All his friends and supporters were Whigs, and he was saturated with the Whig temperament, which combined great strength of governing will, with warm sympathies for the governed. At this still early age of thirty-six, he probably had numbers of allies in the highest circles on the Whig side. His greatest naval friend, Captain Barrington, had just terminated his command of the Venus, on board which ship H.R.H. the Duke of Cumberland had been embarked. Fox, who died one of St. Vincent's dearest friends, was then a lord of the admiralty. In such a position, with his known character, and courtier-like habit and manners, it was natural that when a ship of war was required to attend on and convey H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester from port to port on the

coast of Italy for the benefit of his health, the Alarm should have been selected. The duty much enlarged the young captain's circle of acquaintance amongst the numerous great families who in their travels were drawn towards the Alarm by the presence of the prince.

When the ship was paid off in 1772, Jervis, who never seems to have been content with that small amount of culture which falls to the sailor as his usual lot, went to France for the purpose of mastering the language. He succeeded, and then visited all the principal manufacturing towns in that country.

We cannot refrain from drawing a comparison between the sober steadfastness of the character of Jervis, and the passionate waywardness of that of Nelson, as exhibited in parallel episodes of their lives. Jervis, before 1770, had fixed his affections on his first cousin, Martha Parker, whom he did not marry till thirteen years later, when his capture of the Pégase gave him a fortune and the K.B. Though his health broke down over it, he would not quit his study of French till he had quite mastered it. Poor Nelson, with a tendency to love every woman he saw, and with a desperate desire for immediate marriage, also went to France to learn French; but instead, he became the slave of an abortive transient passion, and never made any progress in the language. It is true that Jervis was twelve years older than Nelson during the French episodes, but the contrast is striking nevertheless.

The next year, that is 1773, Barrington as well as Jervis being unemployed, the friends made a voyage to St. Petersburg, and then visited Stockholm, Carlscrona, Lübeck, and Hamburg; and finally travelled through

Holland before returning to England for the winter. The bent of the sailor's temper was greatly towards the study of economical questions, and the peculiar direction of his travels is an indication of it. But the cultivation of his mind was a perfectly definite object with him. It may be doubted whether he allowed himself the relaxations of lighter literature, but Locke's works formed a portion of his sea library.

In 1774 he and his friend Barrington either bought or hired a yacht, in which they visited all the principal ports on the coast of France, from Cherbourg to L'Orient. It was this cruise that prompted St. Vincent's later well-known saying that "if Captain Jervis had known what he was about in 1774, Lord St. Vincent would have been saved anxiety at Brest in 1800."

The return to England was made on the eve of war with France, and Jervis was appointed to command the French prize Foudroyant, 80, remarkable for her swiftness. Jervis had been sixteen years a captain when he commissioned the ship, and he remained eight years in command of her—facts to be noted in the development of character.

Full of strong Whig sympathies, Jervis must have noted with disdain Lord North's want of success in the early days of the war. The drawn battle between Keppel and D'Orvilliers in July 1778 created naval disputes from which political animosities were not absent. The champions of parties were Keppel on the one side, and Palliser, the commander of his rear division, on the other. The Foudroyant had been next astern of Keppel's flag-ship in the line; Jervis had fought her with bravery, promptitude, and skill. There was no question as to the side he took,

and his evidence as a witness on Keppel's behalf, before the subsequent court-martial, stamps the man with more precision and depth than even his conduct under fire. His boldness, his caution, his firm determination to support his leader at all costs, form a remarkable exhibition of power. But these things also disclose a character which had never found reason to hesitate over any path it had set out to pursue; a personality which had never been in the position of fighting its own way; which had always been accustomed to find the doors of life opening of their own accord to admit it. Doubtless they had opened to him the more readily, being what he was; but he might have been in his early days what he was, and might then have become something different from the practice of knocking vainly at doors which would not open to him. But the summary of his testimony where political feeling and service loyalty were joined to produce it, is too fine to be omitted. "I cannot boast," he said, "a long acquaintance with Admiral Keppel; I never had the honour to serve under him before; but I am happy in this opportunity to declare to this court, and to the whole world, that during the whole time the English fleet was in sight of the French fleet, he displayed the greatest naval skill and ability, and the boldest enterprise on the 27th July; which, with the promptitude and obedience of Sir Robert Harland" (the second in command), "will be subjects of my admiration and of my imitation as long as I live."

In the following year the course of events was still more deplorable, and Jervis saw with his own eyes the Franco-Spanish fleet bearding the British within sight of Plymouth. "I am," he wrote, "in the most humbled state

of mind I ever experienced, from the retreat before the combined fleets all yesterday and this morning."

But naval inactivity and failure had given the opposition such strength that, in the latter part of March 1782 Lord North resigned; the Rockingham ministry was formed, and Jervis' friends, Keppel and Harland, became lords of the admiralty. It was scarcely accident that placed Barrington, now a vice-admiral, in command of a squadron sailing on a special service, and his friend Jervis as one of his captains. It was Jervis' fortune to command a swift ship; it was his will to meet fortune more than half-way.

Intelligence had reached government that the French were preparing an expedition at Brest for the East Indies; and Barrington's squadron was despatched early in April to intercept it. On the 20th the enemy was seen somewhat beyond Ushant, and, uncertain of his nature and force, Barrington made the signal for a general chase. The Foudroyant sprang ahead of her consorts; and before the close of day made out six French ships of war and a convoy. No attempt was made by the French to turn upon their single pursuer, and at ten o'clock they separated, Jervis following up the largest ship. By midnight he was closing, and being on her port quarter, the officer on the forecastle reported that she was putting her helm up, to cross the Foudroyant's bows and rake her. Jervis was for putting his own helm a-starboard, which would have frustrated the Frenchman's endeavour indeed, but would have given the Foudroyant no advantage. Young Bowen, a midshipman, Jervis' *protégé*, and acting as his aide-de-camp, exclaimed—"If we put our helm a-port, sir, we shall rake *her!*" This was done, and the Foudroyant

poured her port broadside close into the stern of the Pégase, 74, and so began a fifty-minute action. It was ended by the surrender of the French ship, when the Foudroyant fell on board of her on the starboard quarter. The victory left the British ship with no one killed, and only two or three beside the captain slightly wounded.

It was the greatest success of the war as yet reported. It was gained by a pronounced Whig captain, under the command of a Whig admiral, a month after the return to power of a Whig administration. The red ribbon of the Bath was a dignity none too high for an officer throwing such lustre on the party; who had never made a mistake, but from first to last had shown tact, judgment, and moral courage, and now became a splendid example of successful intrepidity. Jervis had turned the tide in public estimation, because the news of Rodney's prior and greater achievement was necessarily delayed.

The Foudroyant was paid off at the close of the year; and then Sir John Jervis, K.B., with something handsome in his pocket as the proceeds of his prize, felt himself worthy and free to marry his cousin. He was of all men entitled to preach to the younger naval officers what he had practised in the matter of marriage; but surely he overdid it, if Miss Parker's side of the question be considered. There is a sense of failure floating round us when we contrast the earlier and somewhat humorous, if distinct, expression of opinion on the subject, with his later bitter sailor's-wife war. "Sir," he wrote in 1793 to Lieut. Bayntun, who was an applicant for his favour, "you having thought fit to take to yourself a wife, are to look for no further attentions from—your humble servant."

Bayntun must have been a man after the admiral's own heart in reciprocation of his caustic humour. "Who could have traduced him," he replied, not at all oblivious of Lady Jervis, when "he abhorred the idea as much as Sir John did?" But when there was war to the knife between the commander-in-chief of the Channel fleet and the wives of its captains in 1800, the humour had faded out on both sides, as the injured lady-wife testified when she offered as a toast the wish: "May his next glass of wine choke the wretch!"

In 1783 Lord Shelburne placed Jervis in parliament as member for Launceston, and though he did not speak much, he always voted as a staunch Whig.

In 1785, as now, the minds of statesmen, soldiers, and sailors were divided over the question of balance in the defence of these islands. Land forces, permanent works, and sea forces, all undoubtedly shared in it; but the bias swayed about between them, to exaggerate the value of one force and to minimize that of the others. In such questions Pitt inherited little of his father's skill. A broad reasoned theory of defence was beyond him, and he now strongly adopted the view that because the great naval arsenals of Plymouth and Portsmouth were but lightly fortified, therefore they were open to attack. It was proposed to spend a very large sum of money in erecting permanent works, but the authority of a royal commission was, as in 1859, felt to be a necessary preliminary. Sir John Jervis became a member of it, and it was probably he who split it up on the question of whether it was possible to conceive of the absence of the fleet when such attacks could be in contemplation? No pen but his own

could have framed the sharp sarcasm against Pitt that lurks in the report to the king condemning the whole proposal. In the end he only carried his point by the casting vote of the Speaker of the Commons.

Jervis became a rear-admiral in 1787 at the age of fifty-two, and after twenty-seven years service on the captain's list. He thus did not reach his flag earlier than men now reach it, but his character was moulded by the prompt escape from a subordinate position which is denied to the officers of our day.

At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in 1793 a joint naval and military expedition was projected against the French West Indies. Sir John was offered the command of the naval part of it, and as his old friend Sir Charles Grey was to command the troops, he had no hesitation in accepting it. As an assurance of harmony between the sister services, which it must be said rarely prevailed in joint expeditions, Jervis appointed Sir Charles Grey's son as his flag-captain. There is no space to enter into any description of a series of joint operations more brilliant and harmonious, and not less successful—if only what had been gained could have been held—than any which had preceded them. But it was only the friendship of the chiefs in declining to put a match to the then highly explosive compound of mixed soldiers and sailors, which left the material inert. General Prescott comes down to us as the author of an order of the day against the naval commander-in-chief which is not to be beaten for violence and want of taste. Jervis alone would have met the attack by something more violent, if in better form. He could pass it by, as Sir Charles Grey's matter now.

Jervis, in his first command as a flag-officer, showed himself immediate, enthusiastic, and lavish in his rewards to such as distinguished themselves; and he was far from undervaluing dramatic effect in conferring them. But this was a display of greatness which had to be ground out in the cold mechanism of the admiralty mill. The board suppressed all such indications, and left his despatches bare of spirit.

But the warmth of Jervis' heart was indestructible. When, in December 1794, the friends returning were reminded by the sight of the coast of Ireland that their comradeship was drawing to an end, the sailor bade the soldier pause for a moment ere he quitted the dinner-table. "My dear Sir Charles," he said, and any one who has studied his mobile features will understand with what a tender look and glowing cheek an inner meaning was thrown into the words, "the toast I have to propose is one you will, I am sure, willingly drink. It is this—may the same cordiality and zealous co-operation in future exist in all the united operations of our army and navy, which has been so remarkable in our late campaign, and which I attribute to a cause we both know and feel, to the warm friendship and mutual confidence which existed between us, the commanders; a feeling which also pervaded every rank in both services." The men dared not trust themselves in each other's company for more than a moment after this speech. Thoughts were too deep and hearts too full, and they parted for a time. Sir John used to say in after years that "neither of them wrote a letter on service to the other during the whole campaign."

It is not so easy to understand why, with this experience

to look back upon, Lord St. Vincent should have developed such distinct prejudice against the army as gathered round him in his later years. There may have been other *contretemps* beside Prescott's unfortunate order which excited disagreeable recollections. There was subsequently a question of the discipline of troops embarked, over which a great mistake was made by the King and the Duke of York, and which excited Jervis' anger. There may have been collision with some of the eminent soldiers over the royal commission on defence. But whatever it was, St. Vincent latterly fell upon the habit of exalting the marines and condemning the soldiers to his heart's content. In 1818 he wrote—"It is of great importance to our country that the public should be kept alive upon the subject of our monstrous army, in a series of letters to the *Times* newspaper, showing that the marine corps is best adapted to the security of our dockyards; and that no soldier, of what is termed the line, should approach them. Our colonies ought to have no other infantry to protect them; and the corps of marine artillery should be substituted for the old artillery. The ordnance and appurtenances for his Majesty's fleet should be vested in the admiralty, and entirely taken away from what is termed the ordnance department. The futile employment yclept *staff* should be done away, and all the frippery of the army sent to the devil!" Some of this prejudice had its base, no doubt, in the Whig traditions regarding a standing army, and his political fear of "the horrid prospect of military despotism." But when we find him warmly supporting the consolidation and extension of a purely naval club, and looking on the military club—afterwards to

become the senior "United Service Club"—as a constitutional danger, it is made evident that personal dislikes lay at the bottom of political opinions.

Now, in 1795, came the appointment to the Mediterranean command, the culminating period of the great career; when the work done was of a true English class, when the team driven recognized and cordially submitted to him who held the reins, when a general sense of success gave to the character its great scope, and placed it on its highest level.

The naval command alone was a great one, comprising twenty-five sail of the line and fifty frigates and smaller vessels, but that was but the basis of his work. Before he left England, he had submitted to Lord Spencer, the first lord of the admiralty, a series of probable political contingencies, any one of which would seriously complicate the naval position; not one solution was offered by the government, and he sailed—as perhaps he desired—with his hands free, but with infinite responsibilities heaped upon his shoulders.

He was not easy about the discipline of the fleet, and very possibly foresaw the dangers to follow the want, on the one hand, of fair treatment of the seaman, and, on the other, of inflexibility in enforcing law. He had marked indications which the admiralty had failed to take to heart. The crew of the Culloden, one of ten ships to come under his command, had, he knew, seriously mutinied at Portsmouth a year before; so had the Windsor Castle in the Mediterranean a little earlier. But to his mind, there was the greater danger there, as the Windsor Castle's mutiny had been slurred over. Even on his arrival on his station, if not earlier, he had heard of the outbreak on

board the Terrible not three months before he took command. "The restoration of discipline" was in his mind as strongly as anything, and the question was as to what difficulties he might have in enforcing his views upon a number of captains of whom he knew little or nothing. Troubridge he might calculate on, for he had beaten his recalcitrant crew with unexampled completeness. But what about Nelson, Hallowell, and Hood? It did not take him long to understand what prizes he had drawn in his immediate supporters. Rear-admiral Man indeed, to whom was entrusted the watching of a French squadron in Cadiz, did not impress the admiral favourably. He was too fond of consulting his captains—many of whom were tired of the monotony—and Jervis told him so. If Man had only taken advice he might have altered history and kept his flag flying. In the main, however, Jervis was quickly persuaded that "while such officers supported his orders" his "restoration of discipline was assured."

Jervis was really all things to all men under his command. I feel sure he must have been, like one or two I have met in my own time, a commander, the veil of whose sternness to some men was heavy and intense, and never to be raised, and to other men never worn. How could it ever have been to "George"—George Grey, who was again his flag captain—or to "Ben Hallowell," or even later to "Jemmy"—Captain Vashon of the Neptune? Nelson could never have been "Horace" to any one. He probably never saw the stern aspect of his commander-in-chief's face, neither did he ever see the fun in it. Jervis could never meet the passionate sadness of Nelson's temperament; it was no use suggesting to Nelson to share

the keen humour of his own. That was reserved for the "Georges," the "Bens," and the "Jemmys"; not impossibly the witty little Cumby never saw the stern face except on one occasion when it was made up to frighten him, in fun.

In the midst of the terrible severities which, off Cadiz in 1797, were inflicted by Lord St. Vincent as absolutely necessary to check the progress of disaffection fostered by the emissaries of the United Irishmen—when men condemned on Saturday night were hung on Sunday morning, and when the launches of the fleet surrounding the ships where executions were about to take place, had secret orders to fire into them upon the slightest sign of revolt—this was the time when the great admiral allowed his natural sense of humour its freest display. Space does not allow of the story being told. It must be read in Tucker's *Memoirs*, but the point of it cannot be omitted. St. Vincent, with an immense appreciation of the value of form in the maintenance of order, had given special directions with regard to the morning ceremony of hoisting the colours, which, after all, involved little more than the regular practice now. All were to be on deck, and all were to take their hats off when the band played "God save the King." St. Vincent went himself beyond the order, and generally appeared in special dress. On one occasion an unfortunate captain of the maintop inadvertently omitted to pay the customary salute, and Jervis flew at him. The story went round the fleet, and "little" Cumby, the smart first lieutenant of the smart Thalia frigate, turned the incident to humorous account. He wrote a most amusing parody of the third chapter of Daniel, in which St. Vincent not only figured in the character of Nebuchadnezzar, but

also of the image, this time of "blue and gold," whose "height was about five feet seven inches, and the breadth thereof was about twenty inches." The close parody went on to describe how "a certain seaman, whom thou hast set over the affairs of the maintop," regarded not the order to worship the blue and golden image, and how "the Earl of St. Vincent was full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against the captain of the maintop," and so on. All this went round the fleet, and, not without design, fell into St. Vincent's hands. He set up a high chair in his fore-cabin, and asked Cumby—who, by the way, was an applicant for leave to go home—to dinner with a number of the captains. All through the entertainment St. Vincent was particularly grave and solemn; and when, after the cloth was removed, he suddenly asked his secretary in his sternest tones, "What shall be done to the man whom the commander-in-chief delighteth to honour?"—the guests could only look into their plates for an explanation. "No, sir," said Jervis in reply to an answer; "set him on high amongst the people. Cumby, go and sit on that chair and read this paper!" Cumby in terror read, and the captains, scarcely in less terror, dared but furtively to regard the terrible face of their host. But when the "form of the visage" being changed was reached, St. Vincent broke down into fits of laughter. Cumby was given his leave; and his smartness, and his wit, even at the expense of this stern image of blue and gold, was of advantage to him.

A strangely pathetic episode is the story of Darby and St. Vincent's dream. Darby had greatly distinguished himself at the battle of the Nile, and his ship was knocked to pieces. He, with many others of the Nile captains,

supposed they were reaching Gibraltar on the homeward voyage. St. Vincent thought it of the utmost importance to repair the ships abroad, and detained them at Gibraltar. Darby, disappointed and enraged, let his tongue run so loose that St. Vincent heard of it, and was determined to stop it in his own way. Darby slept in a room on the ground-floor, opening into the street, and he was asleep in it one night after a dinner-party, during which St. Vincent had been particularly gracious to him. He was awakened by a tapping at the window. He opened it, not in the best of humours to find the commander-in-chief outside in uniform, and full of a dream he had had. The dream was all about Darby, and how he had heard him belying his own character in forgetting discipline and letting his tongue go. It was the dreadful ending of his dream which had brought him to Darby's lodgings. In his dream he was at a court-martial, and it was Darby's sword that was on the table. He was so troubled that he could not rest till the dream was told. Next night at dinner, Darby was naturally not in spirits. "Ah," said St. Vincent, "that's my dream! Let's have a glass of wine together." "Indeed, my lord," said Darby, "you have a tongue like a cow—a rough and a smooth side to it!" "Ah, Darby," said St. Vincent, "you're always playing off your jokes on me; but, never mind, it was only a dream. Here's to you, Darby."

Such was the method when the men were open to it; otherwise there was nothing for it but to roll them flat, as Sir John Orde understood when he found himself sent home in disgrace like any other bad boy.

Though, in the same way, St. Vincent put mutinous sea-

men out of the world as any automatic machine would, he had abundant and complete forgiveness in cases where he saw his way. There is no sign that he was any respecter of persons, though no man was more conscious of the rank of office. No senior officer could ever have felt his authority unsupported; no junior with a genuine case could ever have felt he wanted justice.

The care of his ships, his officers, and his men, was sleepless and unceasing; nothing was missed, and he took care to let it be seen that nothing was missed—the stores, the provisions, the ammunition, the sick, cleanliness, bedding, onions and lemons as anti-scorbutics, the necessities of keeping station in the fleet at sea, gun-exercise; orders with reference to all such details of efficiency flew about immediately on his joining his fleet in the Mediterranean. But when provisions ran short, and continued so, he took care to congratulate the seamen, in a general order, on their patience and good behaviour under privation.

The business of the main fleet in the Mediterranean was the close blockade of Toulon, and Jervis stuck to it personally week after week, month after month, blow high or blow low. In the middle of June 1796 he wrote—"Nothing very material has happened during the two months that I have been in this position" (off Toulon). "The enemy bears the blockade of Toulon with Christian patience. Captain Troubridge, who commands the light squadron, never is two miles from the entrance; and I keep as near as my heavy sailing ships will enable me." This close and continuous blockade was really new to the British navy. Hawke had indeed employed it, but it had fallen into disuse. It raises singular reflections to remember that one

of the reasons why it fell into disuse was that it necessitated tacking or wearing the fleet at night, and that the captains objected to being disturbed for that purpose, or even slept through the manœuvre by design. In the Mediterranean fleet Jervis put it mildly that "he had too exalted an opinion of the respective captains of the squadron to doubt their being on deck when the signal was made to tack or wear in the night." Afterwards with captains who drank to the toast—"May the discipline of the Mediterranean never be introduced into the Channel fleet," the terms were stronger—"The commander-in-chief cannot suppose it possible that any captain of a ship under his command is off the quarter-deck or poop when any movement of the ship is made by night or day."

The Franco-Spanish alliance and the failure of Man to obey his orders and to join him, necessitated the withdrawal of the fleet from the Mediterranean. Jervis' command was extended to Cape Finisterre, and he was directed to rendezvous at Lisbon. This was for the double object of protecting Portugal, and intercepting any enemies' fleets proceeding to Channel waters. Early in February 1797 the British fleet, now consisting of ten sail of the line, put to sea from Lisbon in full hope of encountering a superior Spanish fleet which was said to have passed Gibraltar, westward.

By the 13th February Jervis—his fleet now increased to fifteen sail of the line—was off Cape St. Vincent, and had certain news of the approach of a Spanish fleet. Foote of the Niger had watched it for three days, and now came to report. Lord Garlies in the Lively, with Sir Gilbert Elliot as a passenger, had also seen the enemy. Nelson,

in the Minerva, joined, and reported that he had passed through the fleet in the dark. He transferred his broad pennant to the Captain. The British fleet was in the usual order of sailing, in two columns. Jervis made the signal for close order, and to prepare for battle. Sir Gilbert Elliot, Captain Hallowell, and Lord Garlies were the admiral's guests at dinner, and before the party broke up they drank a toast to the victory which was to be next day.

Sir John, if he went to bed at all, went late. He sat up writing far into the night, and he made his will. The weather grew hazy to the southward, and the enemy's guns were heard in the distance.

Jervis was about to take a fleet into action for the first time. He had none of that enthusiastic keenness for the danger of battle which possessed Nelson. He did not pretend to like fighting, but it was now come in the way of duty, and he was prepared it carry it through to the bitter end, whatever that end might be. He had no special views of tactics; the "Fighting Instructions" which afforded him the means of directing his fleet to adopt certain methods of attack, were, he considered, all that was necessary. He was not disposed to theorize about the matter; it was sufficient to bring his ships into contact with the enemy's ships, and then the result would be a foregone conclusion. But he had desired that he might encounter the enemy at daybreak, or in foggy weather; no doubt picturing the difference between the close order of his own fleet which he had drilled so steadily, and the scattered state of the enemy to be expected under such conditions.

The morning of the 14th was foggy. The wind

was fresh from the westward, the ships were sailing by the wind, on the starboard tack, heading about SSW. The look-out ships soon began to report an enemy ahead. Then they were seen here and there from the fleet. Jervis took his official post on the quarter-deck of the Victory—not on the poop where he could see with his own eyes—and he walked up and down with Captain Hallowell. Calder, the captain of the fleet, kept bringing reports of the increasing numbers observed, till he reached twenty-seven, and said something of the disparity. "Enough of that, sir," said Jervis, "the die is cast" (his usual expression when his mind was made up), "and if there are fifty sail I will go through them!" Hallowell could not contain himself; he slapped the great admiral on the back, crying, "That's right, Sir John!—and by God we'll give them a damned good licking."

The story of the battle of St. Vincent has still to be written. No form in which it has been told as yet is quite cohesive and intelligible. I am therefore not going to re-tell it here. But it must be said that Jervis showed none of that tactical appreciation which was so marked a feature in Nelson. It is plain on the face of things that the fleet was taken into action with a false tactical aim. Troubridge, at the head of the line, showed that he expected a certain tactical signal long before it was made. Nelson, at the other end of the line, showed by a bold disobedience of orders, that in his opinion the signal made was *at that time* the wrong one. The losses suffered in the British fleet, too, showed that the first principles of tactics had been ignored; that instead of putting a superior force of British ships on an inferior force of Spanish ships,

two or three British ships had sustained the whole brunt of the Spanish fire.

But February 1797 was not a time for any kind of criticism upon a success. That fell later on the shoulders of the unfortunate Calder. A victory had been won against great numerical odds just at the moment when such a thing was most required. It was the Pégase over again. Jervis had struck in the very nick of time. The barony which it had been settled to confer upon him before the battle, became an earldom in consequence of it, and Jervis stood at the summit of his career.

The battle of St. Vincent destroyed the significance of the Franco-Spanish alliance, and opened the Mediterranean once more to the action of our fleets. The despatch of Nelson to look into Toulon was one of the first-fruits of the new condition. His reinforcement, and the battle of the Nile, were consequences which gave to Great Britain a command of the Mediterranean Sea such as she had never held before, and which was neither threatened nor disturbed until May 1799. Then Lord Bridport allowed the French fleet at Brest to put to sea, and it formed a junction with the Spanish fleet at Cartagena, and threw upon Lord St. Vincent the necessity of concentrating his forces and setting up afresh the real anxious watching. But for this, the state of his lordship's health in no way fitted him. Reluctant as he was to abandon one tittle of his command and its responsibilities till the final moment, it is historically certain that its last exercises in the orders to Lord Keith cannot be defended. If Nelson had been in Lord Keith's place, they would have been disobeyed, and the course of history must have been

materially altered. But even the earl's robust frame and iron will had suffered from the strain. He resigned the command, and reached home in August 1799. It is most characteristic of him, that had he been free to do it, he would have withdrawn his own flag-ship, the Ville de Paris, the most powerful of the ships in the Mediterranean fleet, in order that he might have gone home with the dignity due to his office. He went home, as he had come out, in a frigate, and, as he stigmatized it, "like a convict."

Lord Bridport was then in command of the Channel fleet, and there was under consideration the design of a descent upon Brest, which, had it been carried out, would have employed an army of 70,000 men under St. Vincent's friend and colleague, Sir Charles Grey. This alone would have suggested placing the admiral in command of the fleet. Lord Bridport's wish to retire opened the way, and alarming reports of new conspiracies in the Channel fleet, with knowledge that its general state of discipline was disgraceful, made it a settled policy at Whitehall that the moment his health permitted it, Lord St. Vincent should hoist his flag as Lord Bridport's successor. Time pressed so much that Lord Spencer went down to Bath, where St. Vincent was then recruiting himself, to talk it over. It was of no use Dr. Baird protesting. "The die was cast," said the admiral; and though still to some extent an invalid, his flag was speedily again flying on board the Ville de Paris.

I have already alluded to the difficulties of this command; to the want of support, indeed to the almost open antagonism, which the officers displayed. Such general disloyalty was new to the earl, though when he found it in his second in command he might have been reminded of

the days before Cadiz. He met it all with the openest sternness, and the most absolute repression; and never wavering in belief in himself, gathered, as time went on and they came to know him, the warm adhesion of the best of the admirals and captains. He also strengthened himself as far as was possible, by collecting round him such of his Mediterranean friends as were available; and in this way things continually improved, though abundance of bitter enmities were only suppressed, not destroyed.

The chief duty of the fleet was the monotonous blockade of Brest. Any one examining carefully must come to the conclusion that the escape of Hoche's flotilla in 1796 and of Bruix's fleet in 1799 were entirely due to the admiral's slackness in carrying out this duty. St. Vincent, falling back much upon the view of Lord Hawke, put a new face on the blockade. He made it so close and compact, and gave it such system, that in spite of tremendous efforts, never again did a great hostile fleet put to sea from that port. The dangers of navigation were not the greatest difficulties of close blockade. Ill-health in the crews nearly beat Hawke in his day; St. Vincent met it and beat it in his own intelligent and determined manner. Yet nothing can exceed the humorous oddity of some of his expressions on this supreme point. He once asserted that the men's health suffered from too much fresh beef and vegetables, and too little salt meat.

But the earl's health was still not fit to bear the strain and privation of the Channel command, and when, on the retirement of Pitt and the formation of the Addington ministry, he was offered the post of first lord of the

admiralty, he accepted it with assurance that his work in the Channel fleet was complete, and that the new field of duty was just what he was ready for.

He became first lord in February 1801, and at once fell upon the dragon of corruption, laxity, and mal-administration, which the long direction of all eyes to what was without the navy, had suffered to grow up.

The earl's views were clear upon every point of naval administration. It worked, no doubt, but it was to him wonderful that it did so; and he was sure that great financial waste alone kept it going. The first lord of the admiralty and his board had not then that absolute control over everything naval that they now possess. The navy board on the one hand, with the comptroller by royal patent at its head, and the board of ordnance, with that great officer, the master-general, at its head on the other, could contend, and did, when they exerted themselves, successfully contend, with the board of admiralty on all questions relating to naval material. St. Vincent went into office convinced that the power of the navy board should be broken, and that it should be strictly subordinated to the head of the navy; while the control of its ordnance should be assured to the admiralty. How long has it taken to adopt St. Vincent's views as the true basis of our naval policy! How much should we have saved in wasted energies, and wasted funds, had he been able to carry out his proposals to the full! But he knew that little of administrative reform could be attempted till the war was over. One of his last letters from the Channel fleet declared that "nothing short of a radical sweep in the dockyards can cure the enormous evils and corruptions

in them; and this cannot be attempted till we have peace."

But his powers were immediately directed to the suppression of place jobbery. In one of the letters of the second commissioner of Plymouth Dock to the admiralty in 1693, there is a quaint statement that he "was this day with the agent victualler, whom I found surrounded by pursers soliciting for bread." If we read through the letters from the earl at the admiralty during his early days there, we can only imagine him surrounded by Whigs soliciting for place. But it did not in the slightest degree matter who wrote or who pressed. Royalty only drew as civil a refusal as a captain's aunt, if the man for whom the favour was asked was the wrong man. The master's mate's mother drew a cordial consent if the master's mate was the right man. There is nothing finer in the earl's character than this unyielding purity in the exercise of his enormous patronage. We cannot rightly estimate now how grand it was, for now such purity is also custom. But then St. Vincent stood out alone for right as against custom, and raised—while he knew he was raising—as large a crop of influential enemies as any public man ever had to fight with.

But the real struggle only came on with the peace, and when the commission of naval inquiry began to discover and expose secret wickedness in high places. The impeachment of Lord Melville, though he was personally exonerated, was a mere result of the ball which St. Vincent set rolling.

If the earl thus helped the country and left the lasting fame of a real reformer, *sans peur et sans reproche*, behind

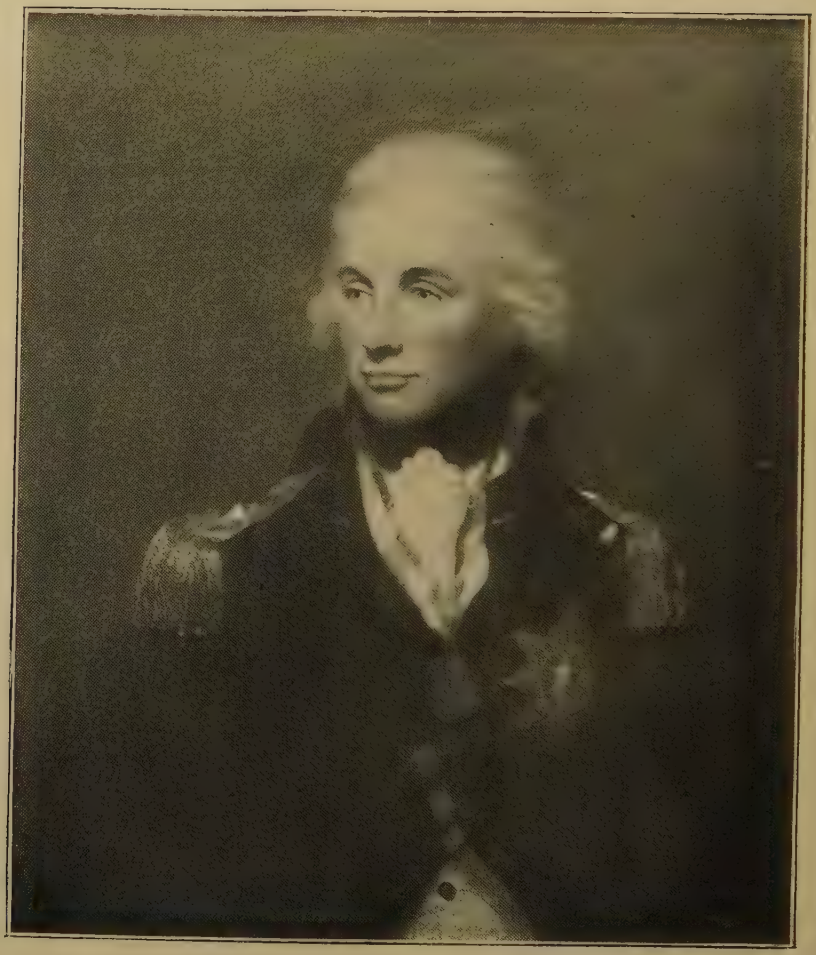
him, he certainly did not help the Addington ministry. It was intolerable that the honour of the quarter-deck should thus be thrust into politics, and when Pitt, weary of retirement, determined to come back to power, he selected St. Vincent as proper material to furnish the first of the steps upwards. Party spirit of the highest proof was at the bottom of the attack, St. Vincent being so staunch and outspoken a Whig. The war had now broken out again, and there was irreconcilable difference in their views of strategy between the first lord of the admiralty and the ex-prime minister. Pitt held the views which are now passing away, as to the incapacity of ordinary naval force to defend us from invasion, which was then so directly threatened. St. Vincent held our later views in their most extreme form. Pitt was a scientific financier who had no sympathy with St. Vincent's commonplace and downright ideas of economical administration. The attack on the first lord of the admiralty was made; but the answers were such as to break it up. The more the details were probed into, the more it was seen that St. Vincent was no niggard in a just expenditure. He shone out only more and more as a real naval reformer who aimed at producing a full naval force without a waste of money. The history even of that time showed the righteousness of his aims. At this day we are exalting the wisdom of his judgment to the skies by doing nearly all that he said ninety-six years ago we ought to do.

Still the odd, humorous crooks in the character spring up and startle us, down to the very last. When the Pitt ministry asked him to go back to the Channel fleet he refused with rough words. As soon as the Whigs suc-

ceeded to office he gaily hoisted his flag once more, and briskly carried out the old duties till the age of seventy-three.

I have said that the life of St. Vincent wanted the balance of the sixteen years of Rochetts' quiet to complete it; but life there was a quaint and a pretty picture. The quarter-deck "tricks and manners" were as the bloom on a fresh plum. The benevolence, the humour, and the righteous thinking were all within it.

NELSON



NELSON.

XII

VISCOUNT NELSON

HORATIO NELSON, twenty-three years younger than John Jervis, was destined to be closely associated with him, to raise his name, first by direct agency, and then by a sort of reflex action, to the summit of a mountain of fame, reached the flag list only ten years behind him, and entered the House of Peers only one year after him. In a sense, the younger man became the complement of the older, each supplying the other with what was wanting in his character, and their joint action raising the prestige of the British navy to a height not attained by any other military service, and even unlikely to be ever reached again.

Nelson was, like Jervis, not unconnected with the higher society of the kingdom. In both cases the connection was on the mother's side, but so far as titles went, Nelson's connection with them through the Walpoles could be traced further back than Jervis' through the Parkers. On the other hand, the son of a parson in a remote country district had none of those early social advantages which fell to the lot of the older sailor, and accompanied him all through his career.

We do not hear of those financial straits in Nelson's early days, which Lord St. Vincent loved to dwell upon as characteristic of his own, but the fifth son of a country parson could scarcely have been less pinched than the second son of the counsel to the admiralty and auditor of Greenwich Hospital. But if Nelson started in his naval career with advantages inferior to those of his "dear Lord, Our St. Vincent," he was not without what is called "interest" of a high class. His mother's brother was Maurice Suckling, who at the time of Nelson's birth in 1758 had been three years on the captains' list, and had greatly distinguished himself in command of the Dreadnought in the West Indies in 1757. He was appointed to the Raisonnable in 1770, and entered his nephew's name upon her books. Being soon transferred to the command of the Triumph, the guardship of the Medway, he took Nelson with him ; but, considering that as one of the "captain's servants," that is, as part of the payment in kind which captains then received, his relative could not learn much seamanship, the uncle put the nephew under the care of a follower of his own, and sent him on a voyage to the West Indies in a merchant ship. This was not exactly the lot which fell to Jervis as midshipman of the flagship on the Jamaica station. Nelson was out of the way of making those very early friends in the navy, who, if the bulk of them are good men in a good position, roll on like a wave all through the service and carry the individual with them. There was for Nelson more of the individual fight and struggle ; and when he reached home after this trip he had a sense of antagonism as between himself, a merchant-bred officer—a later form

of the "tarpaulin"—and the pampered strollers on the royal quarter-deck.

But "service interest" was then, as it is now, a stock of excellent quality; and the nephew of a captain of good standing and fair prospects, who was ready to exert himself in his *protégé's* favour, had things open to him which were not open to the boy who came to sea with no one at his back. We know that Captain Suckling was well thought of, and at least fairly backed, as he was made comptroller of the navy in 1775. This office placed its holder at the head of the navy board, which was to the navy the left arm, when the admiralty was taken as the right. The appointment was by patent under the great seal, and it was usually held by rising captains, who resigned it when they got their flags. Jervis' patron, Sir Charles Saunders, held it; so did Hugh Palliser, afterwards Sir Hugh, and the prosecutor in Keppel's court-martial. While Suckling lived, therefore, and remained Nelson's friend, the nephew's interests were certain to be well looked after, and it would surely be his own fault if his advancement was not rapid. Nelson, on his return to the Triumph, was given some nautical schooling, and also learnt pilotage by a practical method, in charge of a decked long-boat making her way up and down the Thames and Medway on the service of the guardship. In the uncontrollable desire for stirring action and excitement which thus early developed itself, Nelson succeeded in being "lent" to the Carcass, and in her spent the summer of 1773 in the Arctic Regions. So far as it was a new experience, the service may have satisfied the temper of the boy; but the phlegmatic composure of an ice-floe with

the Carcass in its quiet grip must have been violently opposed to the restless longings of the imprisoned midshipman.

Nelson's first regular sea-going man-of-war was the Seahorse, 20-gun frigate. He was appointed towards the close of the year 1773, and sailed in the ship as one of the squadron of Commodore Sir E. Hughes, bound to the East Indies. It must be borne in mind, therefore, that Nelson spent two very precious years in a somewhat broken and unsatisfactory manner; in a manner which would now be considered the worst possible for a youngster, and which any father, knowing the ways of the navy, would avoid like poison if offered for his son. Even the Seahorse was a "small craft"; and when he returned to England in 1776, invalided from his ship for the restoration of his health, he had been brought up for five years as a "small-craft midshipman." Fifty years ago this title was distinctly one of opprobrium. It denoted a young officer who might be a first-rate seaman, but who had narrow views, whose general education was defective, and who was not prepared to take his place beside the well-ordered ranks whose homes were in the berths of great flagships, and other ships of the line. Unless there was special interest, or special fortune, the midshipman brought up in a small craft had his prospects by so much marred. But even if extraneous circumstances pushed him on, the aroma of the small craft was apt to hang about him. His way to become a man of the world was hindered. Mingling for years with only very few equals, amongst whom the courtesies of life and manner were lost in familiarity, the small-craft midshipman could not be wholly at his ease

in general society. There remained peculiarities, simplicities, gaucheries, and embarrassments, which disturbed the *aplomb* of the subject of them, and left general society with the sense that the naval officer in its midst was in it, but not of it. The home of the country parson was scarcely an antidote to the small-craft poison ; and if we contrast Jervis' early environment with that of Nelson, we can scarcely fail to admit that there lies the cause of some of the effect. It is clear that neither society nor his superiors were ever quite sure of Nelson. He was liable to be called "an odd sort of person." He was not altogether sure of himself. Society—Whig society at least—and his superiors, rested on Jervis as upon a bed-rock ; and he never doubted himself for a moment.

The story is told that when Nelson passed his examination for lieutenant in 1777, his uncle, then comptroller of the navy, was present—perhaps as president of the board of examiners—and that after the candidate had passed an excellent examination, the comptroller disclosed his relationship. We are asked to infer that if the examiners had known that they were examining the nephew of the comptroller, they would have favoured him so much as to make it appear that he had done excellently well, when in reality he had not risen above mediocrity ; but that as it was, there had been a first-rate candidate, and no favouring. This is one of those soft and gentle stories that laymen tell of the navy. It is like the innocent statement that Sir Charles Saunders' patronage of Jervis was wholly due to Jervis' own conduct and character. It is the most unlikely thing in the world that Suckling's colleagues—if they were so—on the examination board did not know

whom they were examining; but it is most likely that Nelson, though no lover of scholarship and "book-learning," did pass an excellent examination in seamanship.

Nelson having nominally served for six years, was promoted to be lieutenant of the Lowestoft, a 32-gun frigate commanded by Captain Locker, who had been a *protégé* of Lord Hawke, had distinguished himself as a lieutenant, and was besides, of a distinctly literary turn. No doubt Locker was Captain Suckling's friend, and was taking Nelson with him as a friendly act. It was perhaps when the ship was fitting out that Nelson made the acquaintance of Mrs. Locker, but in any case he left England warmly attached to her, and most probably she fully responded. However it came about, it is certain that within four months Nelson was exercising over Captain Locker that fascination which impregnated the atmosphere surrounding him, and which still draws us towards his memory. Nelson does not seem to have been aware of the place he held in his captain's regard until the latter, falling ill and being afraid of what might happen, made the young lieutenant his executor and the presumptive bearer of his last wishes to his widow. Nothing but surprise, admiration, and strong affection mingled, could have drawn from a lieutenant to his captain, the apostrophe—"My most worthy friend." Nelson had not been more than sixteen months with Locker, when, in July 1778, Rear-Admiral Peter Parker, then commander-in-chief on the Jamaica station, took him into his own flag-ship with the intention of giving him early promotion. For some time at least, the Lowestoft was on the Leeward Islands station, and therefore not under the admiral commanding the Jamaica station.

But Parker in the Bristol had followed the Lowestoft to the West Indies, and therefore it might very possibly have been arranged with the comptroller beforehand that he was to take the nephew with him. On the other hand, if the Bristol and the Lowestoft met, Locker could scarcely have failed to express to the admiral his love and admiration for the young lieutenant. Nor is it likely that Nelson's skill and daring in boarding the prize in a gale of wind under special conditions, could have been forgotten. We are safe in believing that character and conduct had fully backed interest, and that Parker was sure of his ground when in December 1778—Nelson being just over twenty—he put him into the Badger brig, as her commander. In six months Parker gave him further promotion, making him captain of the Hinchinbroke. Five months before his promotion to the Badger, Nelson's uncle the comptroller had died at his post. Most probably the news had, before the promotion, reached the Jamaica station, and it is not impossible that sympathy in his loss combined with the regard in which Parker now held him, contributed to this very rapid advance. Jervis was three years longer in reaching his captain's rank, and in that time he had had all sorts of social advantages which were quite out of the path of the younger man. If there were in his original character any eccentricities or corners; if there were normal impulses requiring control; if there was a tendency to narrow and concentrate the view; the environment preceding post-rank was such as to develop them all. At the same time a strikingly affectionate nature flourished in a soil where grew the kind hearts of his patrons, Locker and Parker. Still we must recollect that exceedingly rapid

rise without a check would breed, in an unsophisticated nature, a forgetfulness that things could scarcely always run so. A tendency to magnify small irremovable obstacles and to fret over them, if it existed in the original character, would naturally be developed from want of experience in meeting them.

Of that tremendous desire for personal distinction, that delight in confronting danger, that awful singleness of destructive purpose, which built his monument in English history, we have till now no hint but his own naïve recital of the prize-boarding. But in the Hinchinbroke he immediately gave a sample of these qualities which was never surpassed in degree, though it might have been in kind, in his later years. He was the life and soul of the attack on San Juan in Nicaragua, which was pressed on till he himself and the greater part of his ship's company were struck down with fever. Out of her complement of 200 men, it is said that 145 were buried, and Nelson's own life was only saved by his recall to command the Janus at Jamaica, where Lady Parker and her little girl nursed him through the worst of the fever until he was fit to be sent home for the recovery of his health.

In less than a year Nelson was afloat again in command of the Albemarle, 28 guns, and after an interval of home service, which was not at all to his taste, and a short service in North America, he was back again in the West Indies, this time under Lord Hood, in the summer of 1782.

It is in the Albemarle that we get almost the first note of that unrestrained and mostly subjective delight in his surroundings which was at the same time a strength and a weakness in the varied character. He wrote of every-

thing belonging to the Albemarle in the superlative degree. His view was that he commanded the finest officers, the finest men, and the finest ship of her size that had ever been seen. It was the same with the Boreas and the Agamemnon later. It has been remarked by a recent biographer that none of Nelson's subordinates in his ships ever in their after lives justified his estimate of their qualities. There was really nothing very special about any of them, and it is sad to think that in Nelson's own later life there was much reversal of his earlier judgment. But this kind of really boyish and uncritical enthusiasm was one of the things which made him such a leader. He believed so fully in his followers, and showed his belief so openly, that it became impossible for them to do aught but their very best to justify it. They could not help loving the man who so greatly raised their self-respect, and they did not dare to shame him by any failure that it was in their power to avoid.

The most brilliant leader that the British navy ever produced veiled his leadership and sank its functions in his followers. They were his companions and colleagues in all advances to the front; and they scarcely knew that it was his spirit that animated them all and made them "a band of brothers."

Though Nelson's love was thus uncritical and universal, he was not without his occasional hatreds of individuals, which were equally uncritical. He has left behind him very few traces of dislike to women, but he took a violent dislike to Lady Hughes, which, however, when carrying her out in the Boreas to join her husband, the commander-in-chief of the Leeward Islands station, he seems to have

well concealed from her. Lady Hughes, who was committing to paper her admiration of Nelson's care and thoughtfulness for his thirty midshipmen, was herself being written about by Nelson as "an eternal clack." If Lady Hughes had had an opportunity of tending Nelson on a bed of sickness, he would have risen from it with strong affection for one whom he would have thought of as the kindest woman in the world. It is she who told the story of the captain of the Boreas racing over the masthead with his midshipmen like one of themselves, but entirely in order to give them courage and activity. The modern captain has a passing qualm of scepticism when he tries to put such a picture of captain and midshipmen into frame, but that is because of the impossibility of realizing that a captain of five-and-twenty could be in his third command. The subjective dislike to Lady Hughes was transferred to her husband, Sir Richard, on arrival on the station, apparently either originating in, or aggravated by, the fact that he played the violin. Captain Ball had a year or two earlier fallen under the ban, the cause of the dislike being his epaulettes. It is not easy to believe that had Nelson taken that kind of affectionate view of Lady Hughes that he took of most women, he would have followed the independent course with regard to American traders which brought so much trouble upon him; or even have taken the strong step of making the half-pay commissioner at Antigua haul down the commodore's broad pennant which Sir Richard Hughes had permitted him to hoist. The acts were all lawful, and even laudable, but they were carried out in opposition to his commander-in-chief, and, like his later refusal to obey Lord Keith's

orders, were exhibitions of the spirit of independence overstepping its proper limits. The same spirit, within due limits, and exercised under the highest sense of responsibility, led him to disobey his admiral's signal at Copenhagen. Direct proof there may not be, but it appears a fair inference to draw from Nelson's whole career and character, that where the strong affection and regard he often bore to his superiors was present, his sense of duty would never have taken him into opposition to their wishes.

Nelson's disdain of Hughes as "a fiddler," coupled with other expressions he has left behind him, lead to the supposition that he had no ear for tune, though he understood time, or rhythm. Another want was humour. A melancholy and earnest seriousness pervades the whole of his literary remains, to which there is seldom that relief which is found in the letters, and more so in the traditions which St. Vincent has left behind him. A little gentle touch of humour is credited to him by the story which records his characterization of Clerk of Eldin's diagrams as "flying geese." But nothing of that broad robust sense of fun which St. Vincent displayed is discoverable in the younger and greater admiral.

Such deficiencies were of no account at all beside his energy, activity, daring, and determination, but they and others left him in some state of isolation amongst contemporaries who were his equals, which in his later life came home to him very sadly. Little things, such as forms of address, seem to indicate that intimate affection—except perhaps in the case of Locker—flowed more freely from him towards his immediate brother officers, than from his brother officers towards him. St. Vincent, who readily

addressed Troubridge as "My dear Troubridge," never seems to have written to "My dear Nelson." It was "My dear Sir" and "My dear Lord." Even Collingwood, addressed affectionately as "My dear Coll.," returned with the somewhat cold address, "My dear Lord."

On the other hand, there is every sign that his junior officers, naturally less instinctively critical, worshipped him. The tender kindnesses and sympathies they received at his hands were like the dew of heaven, and drew worship even though the heaven was admittedly distant.

Little has been published regarding the lady Nelson married, Mrs. Nisbet. Pettigrew, with some of her letters before him, speaks of her disparagingly as commonplace. The earlier biographers of Nelson, especially Southey, altogether failed to realize his passionate, impulsive character, and to them, therefore, the lamentable relations with Lady Hamilton were incongruous. But while towards the unnamed lady in North America, towards Miss Andrews whom he met in France, towards Mrs. Moutray at Antigua, and lastly towards Lady Hamilton, passion was desperate, and in the last case ungovernable, his feeling towards the lady he afterwards married was distinctly cool. Almost evidently she was a lady of that calm and equable temperament, governed by utilitarianism and common-sense, which has no sympathy with, and is almost incapable of understanding the waywardness of genius. She might have lived a happy and contented life beside an ordinary man. She seems to have never been in touch with Nelson's passionate nature. It is surpassingly sad to think that probably for want of this touch, the death at Trafalgar was the most satisfactory ending possible to the wonderful

career. We cannot doubt that such a touch would have nipped a mad passion in the bud. Tender and really appreciative letters from a wife he worshipped, reaching him before and after the Nile, must have kept his sense open to the instability and frivolity of Lady Hamilton's nature. That exquisite loveliness of feature and grace of form, which had already upset a good many otherwise reasonable men, was, when Nelson met the lady, somewhat worn and bulky. A real domestic love at his heart would have closed his eyes to her personal attractions. Insatiable as was his love of praise, open as the simplicity of his nature left him to flattery, even of the grossest kind, a legitimate passion would have guarded him from the blandishments of an empty-headed, good-hearted, and really silly woman.

Concerning this love of praise, we must admit it to have been in such excess in Nelson that we cannot altogether discredit the reported exclamation, "Victory or Westminster Abbey!" It may be more common in men than it appears to be. Active energetic men may really be more stimulated by emulation, which is a race for praise, than they allow. It was Nelson's openness of character which invariably let it be seen how much he desired praise, and how disappointed he was when he missed it. What struck the Duke of Wellington on the only occasion when he saw Nelson, was, that meeting him as a stranger whom he did not know, the sailor's talk was all about himself. Very possibly most men, without such extraordinary grounds for self-appreciation as Nelson possessed, are quite ready to do the same, but are withheld by tact; by the understanding of what others would think. And so most men, disappointed

of what they think their just meed of praise, keep a silence about it which is only broken when they are taken unawares. It is a kind of thoughtful pride which seals their lips; but this was a characteristic almost absent from Nelson's composition. And so again most men disdain flattery because they understand it to be flattery; perhaps none are so impervious that they cannot be reached by the flattery they believe to be sincere.

But without the shield of a legitimate passion, we must admit that so simple, so impulsive, so open, and so tender a nature as Nelson's, was as potter's clay to any woman who chose to take it in hand; and the miserable connection with Lady Hamilton was a congruous outcome of the circumstances.

Nelson's first cross, which was not of his own seeking, was the period of half-pay from December 1787 to January 1793—five years, through which he fretted his life out with unsatisfied longings for another ship. He had had his turn in three commands ranging over more than seven years. A correspondingly long period of non-employment was in peace time to be expected. Jervis under similar circumstances, and being, according to his own account, quite as poor as Nelson was, accepted the inevitable, made use of the leisure in mastering the French language, and storing his mind with the proceeds of foreign travel; most probably too, by wide studies in literature, philosophy, and such economical science as was then extant. Such solidity and quiet perseverance was not in Nelson. His home was the quarter-deck surrounded by such as were dependent upon his will, and upon whom he delighted to lavish his wide affection. His natural life was in the

presence of emergencies small and great, which forbade continuity of thought, and was in itself a kind of sport. He had tried for, and failed to obtain for himself sufficient steadfastness of purpose to master the French language. His failure did not tend to mitigate his inherited dislike to the French nation. Though there are statements that he studied, as well as rambled with his wife through the fields and lanes surrounding his father's rectory, during this period of leisure, no trace of it remained in his life. If there was study, it was of a very desultory and superficial kind.

But the time came when, at the outbreak of the French Revolutionary War, he was appointed to command the Agamemnon, 64, destined to form part of the Mediterranean fleet under Lord Hood.

With that supersensitiveness which possessed him, he had doubted the result of renewed service under his old chief, and was perpetually considering what Lord Hood thought of him, when perhaps he occupied no part of Lord Hood's thoughts. Lord Hood could scarcely know what was in his young captain's soul, beyond smouldering desires. The young captain could scarcely know what was in himself. There could have been very little at this time of that confident, because experienced, spirit which dictated his exclamation before his last battle: "I shall have to give Monsieur Villeneuve a drubbing!"

To Lord Hood he could scarcely be other than a man of considerable energy, but fretful, not quite amenable to discipline, and likely to give trouble. But even on the passage to the Mediterranean the clouds were rolling away on both sides. Nelson thought less and less of what

Lord Hood might be to him, and more and more of what he was to all as a commander. And the admiral could not have missed the growing reverence of the captain. The spirit that was in the Agamemnon *now* became common knowledge in the fleet, whose officers and men were daily appreciative spectators of her handling and management. Every boat's crew that went alongside her, learned that she was "a happy ship"; every officer stepping on her quarter-deck saw enough to assure him of the cordial relations between the captain and his officers; Lord Hood began to discover that the idea of giving trouble was farthest from Nelson's mind, and that, on the contrary, he was a man to be relied on to spring upon any service which might be hinted to him, and to effect it with the smallest means.

It is comparatively easy for a sailor to place his mind in some sort of correspondence with that of Nelson through the earlier part of his naval career. The greatness of his spirit has so little disclosed itself, that we do not feel our own unworthiness even to loose his shoe-latchet. We have in his growing character the notes which enable us to apprehend the weaker, the more pitiful, and the more endearing sides of it, when they afterwards open upon us in close alliance with such deeds as are only recorded two or three times in history. But the blaze of light which springs up every time that Nelson is brought into contact with the enemies of his country dazzles us so that we must perforce half close our eyes as we look upon him. We see then, that whatever there was of pettiness in his character at other times, is entirely swept away. He may fret beforehand over his chances of distinction; he may afterwards worry himself that his deed has not met the appreciation

which it deserved; but in the delivery of the thunder-bolt, a true aim is alone before him; a complete destruction of his country's enemies is the single desire of his soul.

Simple courage we can understand. It sometimes possesses men, who are least conscious that it lies dormant, like a blind fury, and useless sacrifices too often result. We also understand cool courage. It is somewhat passive, not to say phlegmatic; it resists excited feelings, keeps command over the judgment, and allows it to dictate the proper action under circumstances which would upset ordinary judgment altogether. But the courage of Nelson, not only the facing of the most imminent personal danger, but the acceptance of the most tremendous responsibilities, was a combination of fire and ice. His excitement never carried him away, his judgment let his excitement share alike with itself, and the two worked together in producing acts which the coolest criticism of after years only succeeds in commending as at once the simplest and the wisest. Nelson in action with an opposing fleet stands more nearly as a specially inspired being than any great man of modern times; and we cannot contrast him with any of his contemporary admirals, great souls though they bore, without seeing how immeasurably above them all he was when drawing into contact with the enemy.

In his several chases after the French fleets we must admit that little of what may be called the genius of the general was shown. In these, the excitement got the better of the judgment. Had it been otherwise, he could never have failed to follow up the two French frigates he saw off Cape Passaro on the 22nd June, 1798; he would never have been so hasty in quitting Alexandria, having once

made up his mind that the French were bound thither; and he never would have chased a second time to Egypt after Villeneuve's escape from Toulon.

But in presence of the enemy—in Hotham's action, at St. Vincent, at the Nile, at Copenhagen, and at Trafalgar—it is quite impossible to conceive of more perfect tactical knowledge applied in more perfect style, with greater decision of purpose, or more sustained determination. And yet it was all so plain and simple, that historians looking for something profound, for the solution of some great intellectual problem in the mind of a hero, have passed over the gold at their feet to reach the glittering pyrites farther off.

The tactical essence distilled roughly by James, Duke of York, and Penn, ought surely, we now say, to be the first product to come over when the heat of thought was applied to the compound question of the sea fight. What did Clerk of Eldin, the layman, do but expand theoretically the plain practical issue set out one hundred and twenty years before he wrote? What was the practical issue? Only that as the movements of ships were limited by the conditions of time and space, and as victory was decided by superiority of gun-fire for a time, a skilful admiral should always endeavour so to use time and space as never to expose—more than could be helped—a part of his fleet to the full fire of the other; but on the contrary should bring the full fire of his fleet, for the time, to bear upon a part of the enemy.

An admiral might justly, perhaps, assume that gun for gun his ships would ultimately beat the others. But in a line-of-battle pitted against a line-of-battle, it could seldom

be gun for gun. Thirty-two, or even twenty-five guns might be pitted against forty-five, or even more. There might be more than gun for gun in one part of the line where the superiority would be wasted; and less than gun for gun at another part of the line where victory could not be achieved for want of equality. Therefore a materially equal but morally superior fleet, could never be certain of emphatic victory in the ordinary ship to ship encounter all along the line. Much less could a materially inferior fleet hope to do more than hold its own in that sort of battle.

How is it that no British admiral except Nelson had ever carried such very obvious theories into practice? The question is most difficult to answer, and it is not made easier by reflecting that his contemporaries missed the points in a remarkable way, and that many men, if not most men, now miss them.

I have endeavoured to show that St. Vincent even, in advancing upon the Spanish fleet had no distinct tactical aim. His victory, except by counting mere numbers, was not a remarkable one as it stood, and it would have been almost a partial action had it not been that the Captain, by incurrring for herself alone four times the average loss, secured a better result. In any case, and apart from Nelson's independent act, the British advance exposed the van to the whole fire of the Spanish weather division, without any adequate reply, so that the two van ships, the Culloden and the Blenheim, lost between them as many as the other eleven ships—excluding the Captain and the Excellent. This followed first, on attacking the larger instead of the smaller body of the enemy; and secondly,

on either postponing the signal to "tack in succession" till the bulk of the British ships were hopelessly out of action, or from not making the signal to "tack together" at that moment.

What ought to have been done must have been plain to the captains of Jervis' fleet, but it took a Nelson to act on his convictions, risking all the dangers of direct disobedience to orders in view of the higher purpose that was before him. Yet though the tactical failure of St. Vincent is made plain by Troubridge's expectation of a much earlier signal to tack in succession, and by Nelson's action, very little notice of the simple profundity of the questions involved has appeared. Ekins submits a variety of fancy diagrams of the battle, and even Mahan scarcely perceives the impossibility of following James, and does not notice the flat contradiction between James and Nelson.

Nothing could be simpler than Nelson's object at the Nile; nothing more splendid than the pursuit of the object; and never before had such success attended a tactical movement at sea. Nor is it easy to reduce to simpler terms Nelson's own statement: "By attacking the enemy's van and centre, the wind blowing directly along their line, I was enabled to throw what force I pleased on a few ships." Yet even his own flag-captain, the most gallant Berry, did not know how the battle had been fought, nor why Nelson had fought it in that particular way.

With the battle of Trafalgar it was the same. Diagram after diagram of the opening and continuation of that battle has been published, accompanied by letter-press expatiating on the greatness and wisdom of Nelson's tact-

ical idea, which yet ignore it as though it had never been. Contrary to what is usual with him, Ekins, however, does not in this case present a fancy sketch. Without attempting an accurate representation, the admiral preserves the real nature of the attack, and allows that Nelson himself, Collingwood, and the captains, had some comprehension of what was before them, some understanding of Nelson's most lucid explanation.

The strange thing is that in order to produce a diagram without any tactical meaning in it, the draughtsmen and narrators do not hesitate to ignore Collingwood's primary statements and the ships' logs, the signal books, and the natural motions of ships through the water. Even so great, so careful, and so necessarily expert a historian as Captain Mahan, has allowed himself, in the battle of Trafalgar, as well as in that of St. Vincent, to follow the multitude to do evil. When Collingwood distinctly states that he penetrated the allied line at the point ordered, namely, "about the twelfth ship from the rear," and that the Victory penetrated also at the point proposed by Nelson, namely, "about the tenth ship from the van," Mahan, following an unfortunate lead, makes Collingwood penetrate astern of the sixteenth ship from the rear, and Nelson penetrate astern of the twelfth ship from the van, thus giving Collingwood's division five ships more, and Nelson's some five ships less to deal with than Nelson himself had proposed. In all these diagrams Nelson's tactical object is lost sight of, and there only remains the theoretical defect in his approach, which exposed the vans of the two columns to the whole broadside fire of the Franco-Spanish line, without offering adequate reply from his rear ships.

But the fact was that the principle he had laid down was the direct approach in line abreast, which was the most perfect form possible, and though most of the diagrams are very careful to emphasize the approach in two columns, each in line ahead, it is not so certain either that such a thing was in Nelson's mind, or that the approach did not more nearly represent the two columns each in a rough quarter-line, which is the essence of Ekins' diagram. It is no doubt true that Ekins, writing, and consulting with eye-witnesses in the year 1828 or thereabouts, was sure that the approach was, and was intended to be, in line ahead. But he does not seem to be aware that whereas, when he wrote, there were two signals to choose from, one to "bear up in succession" and one to simply "bear up," the one signal available in 1805 did not specify whether the movement was to be made "together" or "in succession." As therefore Nelson had, in his Memorandum, declared his intention to "bear up together," there is something wanting to show why all the captains should have interpreted his signal in a sense different from the admiral's expressed intention.

No doubt much can be advanced on the other side, but little that does not grow faint on closer investigation. In a brief summary of this sort, it is impossible to go behind broad generalizations; but perhaps when it is pointed out that James' diagram—to take one out of many—is impossible, light may be thrown on the tactics actually carried out. The Victory, in this diagram, is represented as heading—with her column after her—for the tenth ship from the allied van. Allowing for the relative motions of the two fleets, the British at about three knots, and the allied

fleet about two knots, the Victory could hardly be expected to fetch the fifteenth or sixteenth ship from the van; while the sternmost ships of Nelson's column, steering, by the hypothesis, after the Victory, might expect to pass astern of the line altogether.

We thus see how the best and most careful men may miss plain tactical propositions; and in our own immediate day, exactly the same mental aberration shows itself common. In all the English diagrams of the battle of the Yalu that I have seen, Admiral Ito is branded with capacity for making the ridiculous tactical blunder of approaching the left wing of the Chinese, and then dragging his fleet all across their front, under the very best fire they could offer, in order to attack the right wing. The draughtsmen have never given a thought to the tactical problem, even forgetting that such a form of approach could not be accounted for, and that, if it was made, it reflected disgrace on Ito's character. Obviously the Japanese never approached the Chinese left wing until after they had circled round the right—as the only Japanese diagram I have seen clearly shows.

However difficult it may be to believe it, these facts are sufficient to assure us that the very simple clear-sightedness which characterized Nelson as a leader of fleets into action, is an extremely rare quality. The normal admiral never had original conceptions of that kind; still more did he become devoid of them when the excitement and the responsibility of taking his fleet into action came upon him. They all fell back upon precedent where they were safe; gained partial victories, in spite of their want of skill, moral and intellectual; or missed them because of it.

Long-continued and very close thinking may teach us to appreciate the perfect simplicity and completeness of Nelson's tactical designs; power to appreciate the moral greatness which enabled him to carry them out with equal simplicity and completeness, is denied to us. We can only stand aside and watch with awe and amazement, feelings which are increased when we contrast the entire self-confidence which always came to him in view of battle, and the want of it which so often attacked him at other times.

Constantly through his correspondence we find the recurrence of self-depreciation, and there is the remarkable instance of his self-accusatory letter which he submitted to Captain Ball, and which Captain Ball prevailed on him not to forward. Yet when the capture of Bastia once became a possibility in his belief, he had no hesitation in concealing the actual force of the garrison, in order to make sure that it would be attempted, and he never for a moment wavered until the thing was done.

His one great failure was at Teneriffe, and it can hardly be allowed that the attack was either wisely designed, or skilfully carried out. But it is here, more than anywhere, that the magnificent side of his character shines.

In darkness, with a knowledge of complete failure, and that there had been a great deal of utterly useless bloodshed; with a shattered right arm, and weak from loss of blood; his immediate thought, when he found they were carrying him to the Seahorse, and not to his own ship, was far away from himself. He refused to be taken on board. He was told it was death to him to refuse. "Then I will die," he exclaimed; "I would rather suffer death than alarm Mrs. Fremantle" (who was on board her husband's ship)

"by her seeing me in this state, and when I can give her no tidings whatever of her husband!"

How can we sufficiently realize the power of spirit over flesh, truly to picture to ourselves the spare figure of the admiral, his right arm hanging loose and bloody, swarming up the side of the 74-gun ship Theseus by one man-rope, and crying, as he reached the quarter-deck, for the surgeon to get his instruments to cut his arm off? And then, suffering the amputation without a word, and setting out to write a letter to Jervis with his remaining left hand, only sixty hours after the right had been removed! Was ever such an example of the power of mind over body, even if it were not remembered how frail the body was?

It was necessary to send him home for the recovery of his health, and it was a weary time before the constant pain was stilled. He was at home, at Bath and in London. In a letter from Bath to the Duke of Clarence, Nelson made it almost unique by a rare indulgence in epigram. "I assure your Royal Highness, that not a scrap of that ardour with which I served our king has been shot away!"

It was necessary, in order to obtain a pension for the loss of his arm, that Nelson should memorialize the king. The memorial was written some time in September, and has a curious sense in it of pride and modesty contending. It is formal, and yet personal; missing nothing in his services, yet at the same time deprecating them. But it is a tremendous list of responsibilities assumed, of dangers passed through, and of bodily sufferings. Four fleet actions, three frigate actions, six fights with batteries, ten boat actions; besides fighting on land. Perhaps, indeed, others of his contemporaries could have shown a like share in hard

fighting. Many a man of great services, when they come to be set out on paper, has yet really no service at all; has chanced to be at different times in a series of positions of great danger, and has come out of them—which is all that can be said. But there was not in Nelson's case one single danger which he had not personally courted; not one responsibility which he could not have avoided without blame; not one wound or illness which he had not knowingly run the risk of for the sake of what was beyond it all. It is impossible to doubt, on the one hand, that these tremendous acts arose out of a sense of duty which in religion would be fanatical; and on the other, out of some sense of actual delight of the fox-hunting kind, which I can only explain by supposing bodily fear and mental power to banish it—the delight being in the mental victory.

But before he was well, he burned to be afloat again. In December 1797 it was settled that he was to hoist his flag in the Vanguard, until the Foudroyant, then building, should be ready for it. Berry was to be his flag-captain, and he was to rejoin St. Vincent off Cadiz. There was elation, but probably no intended humour in his letter of the 8th December to Berry: "If you mean to marry, I would recommend your doing it speedily, or the to-be Mrs. Berry will have very little of your company; for I am well, and you may expect to be called for every hour."

The Vanguard sailed, with Nelson's flag flying, on the 10th April, 1798. It was only a few days after rejoining St. Vincent's flag that the Vanguard, Orion, and Alexander, with three frigates and a sloop, were detached into the Mediterranean in order to report on the expedition known

to be fitting out at Toulon. It is well remembered that Nelson did not look into Toulon till Napoleon had sailed without leaving a trace of his destination. The admiral's chase of the French fleet is at once a testimony to his sagacity, to his distrust of himself, and to his tendency to yield the results of reflection to impulse. Having made up his mind that Napoleon had gone to Egypt, he so set his heart on finding him there, that neither the possibility of meeting him at sea, nor the possibility of reaching Egypt in advance of him, were allowed to control his mind. On the 22nd June, off Cape Passaro, Nelson knew that the French fleet had left Malta only six days before, with a flotilla that included 280 transports. At the time this information reached him, one of his ships was in chase of two ships, supposed to be French frigates. In his previous perplexity as to where the French had gone, the pursuit of these ships was of all things that which should have been carried out. But the news he received fastened his mind on Alexandria, and the chasing ship was recalled. Then, on reaching Alexandria, the mere fact that the French were not at the moment there, entirely displaced the reasoning which had led him to recall the Leander. A sudden attack of disbelief in himself led to the collapse of his conclusions, and took him away from Alexandria only a few hours before Napoleon arrived. To us now, it seems almost obvious to reflect that a great flotilla such as Napoleon led, could not be expected to move with the expedition of a squadron of fourteen sail, even though one of them was jury-rigged; hence we are thrown back on Nelson's impetuosity of impulse to account for his failure in meeting the French at sea.

I have already dwelt on the simplicity, directness, and completeness of the attack in Aboukir Bay, but to my mind the wonder of the battle was not the skill of its design. It was the automatic action of a mind which could put a broad issue into such tremendous test, without the slightest hint of a pause for consideration.

The magnificence and the simplicity of the character of the conqueror at the Nile were brought into almost pathetic contrast on the return of the fleet to Naples. One so vainly wishes that it had not been so, when one reflects what might have been, had Lady Hamilton been a noble instead of a silly woman. But at least Nelson's memory is pretty well freed now from the dastardly pusillanimity with which violent party spirit was accustomed to charge it. Yet it is scarcely possible that from the return to Naples, until he re-hoisted his flag in the St. George to sail for the Baltic in February 1801, the life of the admiral could have been other than one of exquisite misery. We have a sense in studying his public acts, and his sentiments as recorded by himself, through this period, as though everything was unhinged with him. The trouble of the guilty love, the trouble of disloyalty to an unforgiving wife, the trouble of a worthless son-in-law, the trouble of inexcusable breaches of discipline, could not possibly have been met by the flatteries of degraded courtiers, the congratulations of society people who could not possibly be friends, or even by the honest cheerings of the multitude. Surely nothing more wretched was ever disentombed than the "Thompson" correspondence from the San Josef? How can we fail to wish that the letters had been burnt, instead of published, fifty years ago, and

that the truth might have been buried ten thousand fathoms deep!

Henceforth there was no peace of mind for the great instrument of our defence. There was indeed the fierce joy of battle to drive out the melancholy conviction of a blasted private life. There was rest of a kind, as at Copenhagen, when "it was warm work, and the day might be the last of any of them at a moment," and when he was able to exclaim—"But, mark you! I would not be elsewhere for thousands!" The excitement which could keep his frail body warm in an open boat and without proper covering, could no doubt drive away troubled reflections. So also, as can be seen from the letters, could the feeling of the great place he occupied in swaying the destinies of Europe, arouse in him a sense of the duties of greatness. But except here, is chaos. No more astonishing revelation of it than the undoubted fact that at nine o'clock at night after the bloody victory of Copenhagen, Nelson sat down in his cabin to write indifferent verses to Lady Hamilton. The incongruity was tremendous, even when the verses were supposed to be Nelson's own composition. Recently, however, some words, written by Nelson upwards of two months earlier, have been unearthed, which give colour to the suspicion that Nelson wrote from memory, or with a copy before him. But surely, if there is incongruity in the idea of a man sitting down to compose indifferent rhymes a few hours after closing the subjugation of Denmark, first in a bloody fight, and then by acute diplomacy, there is twenty times as much in that of the same man writing such verses from memory, or copying them!

In every point of it, Nelson's command of the home

defence, from Beachy Head to Orford Ness, from July 1801 till the peace, in October, was distasteful to him; and, except the Thompson series, his letters from the Amazon are the most painful to read. Yet none so disclose the excessive warmth of his affections, and the quality which in last century used to be called sensibility. But he disbelieved in the necessity of any such service; his heart was, for the first time, on shore and not afloat, and he fretted like a child because his desire was denied him.

But when the blast of war once more blew in his ears, and from the time of his hoisting his flag in the Victory in May 1803 till his death in October 1805, order once more reigns, and we continue in presence of a great soul. The faults and the follies of the friend we have loved can be forgot by us, and we can see him only as we wish to see him. And though, in the totally mistaken and indeed unjustifiable voyage to Alexandria after a Villeneuve who had got back snugly into Toulon, and in the run down to the south in the West Indies when Villeneuve was in the north, there are seen the same workings of impulse which had given him such trouble in 1798, we must entirely overbalance both by the splendid generalship which took him to the West Indies, and threw Villeneuve into Calder's arms.

Then, in no part of his life do his perfection as an admiral, his lovableness as a man, and his grandeur as a commander, display themselves to like extent. The care that he shows in every detail with regard to his fleet; the extraordinary success that attended his sanitary arrangements; the good-humour and contentment that seems to have reigned in the ships; the cheerful obedience that all

classes rendered ; and the perfect trust that all reposed in him, are proofs positive of his consummate ability in the control of sea-life. Then again, the moderation and calmness with which he treats partial contacts with the enemy; his commendation of Admiral Campbell in the case of judicious retreat before a superior force; the general sort of reticent control he maintained over the forces he commanded, and his quiet determination not to fritter them away in face of the paramount duty which was before him; all these things showed forth qualities of the highest character, unmixed with any hindering idiosyncrasies which are so commonly found allied with them. Then, as a man, what of the real affection he showed for all who deserved it ; his thoughtful consideration for the feelings of those under his command—notably in the case of Keats of the Superb, and later to Codrington off Cadiz ; even the kindliness which prompted the presentation of a little piece of plate to the curé of the church at Madalena ? In all such things there are only signs of a man who loved much, and in whose heart was no guile. But to the unfortunate Villeneuve there must have been something positively awful in thinking of that terrible commander. In his mind there was no sense of being the "decoy" that recent years, and recent years only, have attributed to him. Nelson's sudden appearance in the West Indies was to Villeneuve the out-generalling of Napoleon. The idea of Nelson being after him sent him home with the West Indian programme scarcely touched. The sight of Calder's fleet ready to intercept his passage to Ferrol could have recalled no commander's work if not Nelson's ; the idea of Nelson in the Channel before him was the

last straw that broke the camel's back and sent him to Cadiz.

I have already dwelt on the splendid simplicity of the Trafalgar tactics, and need not now recall the subject; but it is never possible to remember Trafalgar without bringing forward a supreme sorrow, already mentioned. However glorious may be the death which those meet who expire at the moment of successful sacrifice, a green old age, surrounded by the family and held in honour by the millions of countrymen who admit their debt, is the end we should wish for our hero-warriors. The sadness of Nelson's death, under the dim rays of the cock-pit lantern, rests in the reflection that there could have been no green old age for him. Could he have been spared that extreme bodily suffering which his constitution condemned him to, could there have been nothing but the sigh of relief in the thought that "thank God! he had done his duty," the bullet from the Redoutable's top would have sped on an errand of unclouded mercy. For a life after Trafalgar must have been for Nelson one of great and almost unmitigated misery. The scales must have gradually fallen from his eyes, and "dear, dear Merton!" must have become a hell to him as the years rolled on, and reflection, with little to break it, and much to enforce it, had abided with him. As it was, let his epitaph be that his sins were forgiven him, for he loved much; and has left us a memory where weakness is but a foil to the sublime.

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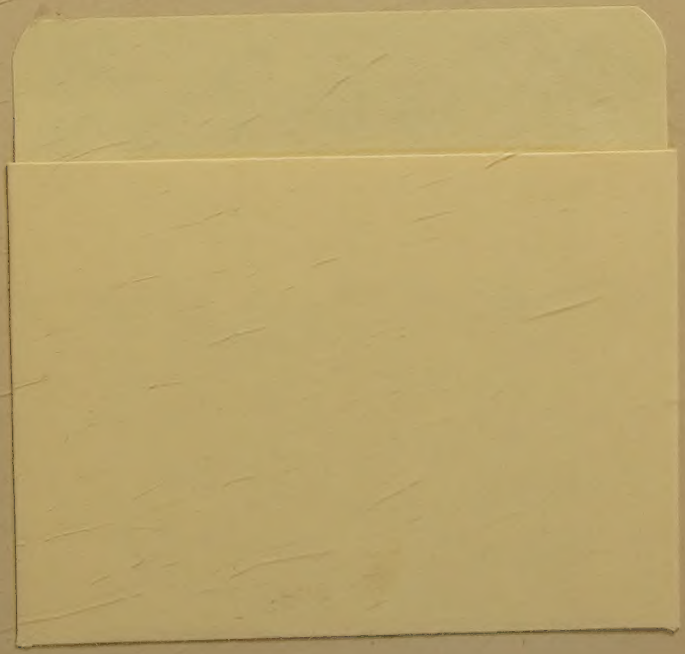

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